

Encountering Nicaragua

United States Marines Occupying Nicaragua, 1927-1933

Christian Laupsa



MA Thesis in History
Department of Archeology, Conservation, and History

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

Spring 2011

Encountering Nicaragua
United States Marines Occupying Nicaragua, 1927-1933

Christian Laupsa

MA Thesis in History
Department of Archeology, Conservation, and History
University of Oslo

Spring 2011

Contents

Contents	v
Abbreviations	viii
1. Introduction.....	1
Topic	1
Research Questions.....	3
Delimitations	3
The United States Marine Corps: a very brief history	4
Historiography	5
Michael J. Schroeder	6
Richard Grossman	6
Richard Millett	7
Michel Gobat	8
Other literature	8
Primary sources	9
Concepts	12
Occupation	12
Marine perceptions	13
Americanization.....	13
Structure of the thesis.....	14
2. Historical Background.....	16
Nicaragua: a divided nation.....	16
Political and economic divisions.....	16
Racial divisions.....	17
Geographic divisions	18
U.S.-Nicaraguan Relations ca. 1900-1927	19
“Panama policy”	20

The U.S. interventions in 1909 and 1912	21
Chamorro's <i>coup d'état</i> , Civil war and U.S. intervention	23
The Stimson Mission.....	25
Conclusion	26
3. "A sorry country and a sorry people"	27
The Marines.....	27
The making of a Marine.....	28
Colonial infantry	29
The Natives.....	31
The people and their politics.....	31
Hygiene and morals.....	36
The Marines Occupy Nicaragua.....	37
Establishment of law and order	37
Establishing and leading the GN.....	42
Conclusion	44
4. The Encounter with Caudillismo.....	45
Marine Strategies	47
Nicaraguan caudillismo	47
The Marines trying to understand caudillismo	49
Overcoming Caudillismo.....	54
"Supervising" municipal elections.....	55
Increasing government efficiency	61
Guardia Nacional: the sole military and police force	63
Undermining of the Nicaraguan authorities: GN vs. Guardia Hacienda	64
Rural police agents	66
Conclusion	69
5. In Search of Principles	70

“North-Americanization”	70
Building trust in the government	70
Let us create the GN in our image.....	73
Barriers to North-Americanization	76
Cultural differences in understanding Nicaragua.....	76
Race and language.....	81
Changing command.....	84
Conclusion	87
6. Conclusion	89
The Marines.....	89
The Problem	89
The Solution.....	90
Successes	92
The Main Objective	93
Bibliography.....	94
Archival sources.....	94
Published primary sources	94
Online sources	94
Literature	94

Abbreviations

Area Commander	AC
Commanding Officer	CO
Defending Army of the National Sovereignty of Nicaragua	DANSN
Department Commander	DC
Entry	E
Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua	GN
Jefe Director de la Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua	JDGN
Juez de Mesta/Jefe de Cantón	Juez ¹
Major General Commandant	MGC
Monthly Record of Events	MRE
Record Group	RG
United States Marine Corps	USMC
United States National Archives	USNA

Dates in the notes are written DayDayMonthMonthYearYearYearYear. Making April 12 1931: 12041931

¹ Both Juez de Mesta and Jefe de Cantón will be abbreviated Juez. They had very similar roles, the Jefe de Cantón being the Juez de Mesta's assistant/deputy.

1. Introduction

Topic

The topic of this thesis is the role of U.S. Marines in the occupation of Nicaragua from 1927-1933. The U.S. intervention in the Nicaraguan civil war of 1926-1927 was legitimized by the claim that they were there to protect the lives and property of U.S. and other foreign nationals. To end the civil war the U.S. special envoy Henry L. Stimson negotiated a peace agreement, which in effect established the U.S. occupation of Nicaragua. By the terms of the peace agreement, the United States Marine Corps (USMC) was forcibly to disarm any group that did not accept the terms of the agreement. The Marines were also to establish, officer, and train a Nicaraguan constabulary, the *Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua* (GN). In addition the Marines were to establish and maintain law and order until the GN had been organized, trained, and would be ready to assume those duties.¹ The peace agreement also stated that the U.S. was to supervise the upcoming 1928 Nicaraguan Presidential election. The GN became one of the most influential organizations in Nicaraguan history. Its heritage, it could be argued, is still visible today in 2011. The first Nicaraguan *Jefe Director de la Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua* (JDGN), Anastacio Somoza García, became president of Nicaragua in 1936. Somoza and his sons Luis and Anastacio Somoza Debayle ruled Nicaragua backed by the GN, until the regime was overthrown in 1979.² The present democratically elected Nicaraguan president, Daniel Ortega, was in 1979 the leader of the party, *el Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional*, which led the ousting of the Somoza dynasty and the GN.

The United States interests in what would become Nicaragua became manifest early in its history.³ In 1788 the future president Thomas Jefferson suggested that by utilizing the natural waterways of San Juan River and Lake Nicaragua an inter-oceanic canal, between the Atlantic Ocean in the east and the Pacific Ocean in the west, could be constructed.⁴ However, no actual initiative was taken to build such a canal until the Mexican-American war 1846-48 and

¹ The peace agreement will be described in more detail in chapter 2.

² The Somoza family ruled through puppet presidents when they were not formally in power themselves.

³ Nicaragua became independent from Spain in 1821 and entered into the Mexican Federation. In 1823 Nicaragua broke away from the Mexican Federation along with Costa Rica, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala and formed the United Provinces of Central America (UPCA). The UPCA disintegrated as a result of internal political conflicts in 1838.

⁴ Michel Gobat, *Confronting the American Dream: Nicaragua Under U.S. Imperial Rule* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 1.

the annexation of New Mexico and California 1848. Coinciding with the annexation gold was discovered in California. The ensuing “gold rush” caused an increased demand for more rapid transportation between the U.S. east coast and, what would become after the annexation in 1848, the U.S. west coast. The most viable routes between the coasts went across the isthmus of Central America.⁵ In 1851 Cornelius Vanderbilt, a U.S. shipping magnate, and his *Accessory Transit Company* made transisthmian crossing more efficient, reducing the travel time from twenty to two days.⁶ A conflict between the *Accessory Transit Company* and those who formerly had provided transisthmian transport lead to the first U.S. military intervention in Nicaragua, the bombardment of San Juan del Norte in 1854.⁷ The following year the U.S. filibuster William Walker was invited to assist the Liberals in the city of León in the almost continuously ongoing violent struggle over political power with the Conservatives in the city of Granada. Eventually, with the help of U.S. mercenaries, Walker managed to usurp power and himself up to be president of Nicaragua and exploit the country’s resources.⁸ Walker was rescued by U.S. Navy ship, when in a rare moment of Central American unity all five countries, and both political parties, combined to remove him from Nicaragua.⁹ From this point on the U.S. intervened several times in Nicaragua to protect U.S. interests. The last time was the intervention in Nicaraguan civil war of 1926-1927 and the subsequent occupation.¹⁰

During the occupation of Nicaragua there was never established a U.S. military government, as was established during the occupations of Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic.¹¹ This left the U.S. government with less formal power than in the other occupations mentioned. The lack of formal power, however, did not necessarily translate into less ambitious goals or less real power. The GN was in principle responsible to the Nicaraguan president, but all of the Marines assigned to the GN were appointed by the U.S. government.

⁵ Across Nicaragua and Panama respectively.

⁶ Gobat, 2005, p. 23; with the *Accessory Transit Company*’s more efficient transisthmian travel intercoastal travel was reduced to 22 days.

⁷ Gobat, 2005, p. 23; San Juan del Norte may also be refereed to by its English name Greytown.

⁸ Gobat, 2005, p. 26 and 34; in the war that forced Walker out of Nicaragua his troops burnt Granada, leaving only a sign with the inscription “Here was Granada”.

⁹ Gobat, 2005, 37-40; Vanderbilt had in 1853 *Accessory Transit Company* been forced, by his business partners who coincidentally supported Walker’s ambitions in Nicaragua, to sell all of his stock in the company. Vanderbilt as a token of his gratitude to his former business partners supported financially the joint Central American effort to have Walker removed.

¹⁰ One might even add the when U.S. forces mined Nicaraguan ports in 1984 and the support to the Contras during the 1980’s.

¹¹ Neill Macauley, *The Sandino Affair* (Minacopy: Wacahoota Press, 1998 [originally published 1967]), p. 41; the occupations of Cuba was 1898-1902 and 1906-1909, the occupation of Haiti was 1915-34, and the occupation of the Dominican Republic was 1916-1924.

Research Questions

The intention of the thesis is to answer the following main research question:

How did the Marines serving in Nicaragua perceive their role, and what did they consider to be their main objective, during the occupation?

In order to answer the main research question several other questions will have to be posed:

- What did being a U.S Marine amount to in the post-1898 era?¹²
- What was the problem the Marines perceived they were in Nicaragua to solve?
- How did the U.S. officers of the GN try to solve the perceived problem?
- To what degree did the Marine officers in the GN perceive they succeeded in solving the problem and what factors entered into this perception?

The first two of these questions will seek to create a basis from which the other two questions will be discussed. The third question will primarily be discussed in chapter 4. The final questions will primarily be discussed in chapter 5.

This thesis will argue that the Marines felt that their role as officers in the GN, the task of establishing as strong and popular GN was the most important. The U.S. officers tried to accomplish this by attempting to concentrate as much power as possible in the GN and thereby build the standing of the GN in Nicaragua.

Delimitations

This thesis will examine the Marines engaged in the occupation of Nicaragua from 1927-1933, that is from the signing of the peace treaty in Tipitapa May 12th 1927 until the last Marine departed from Nicaragua January 2nd 1933. At the height of the conflict against Augusto Calderon Sandino's guerilla army, the Defending Army of the National Sovereignty of Nicaragua (DANSN), as well as during the U.S. supervised elections, there were more than

¹² Throughout the thesis the post 1898-era, or decades for variation, will always refer to the period from 1898 to the withdrawal of the Marines serving in the Haitian constabulary, *Garde d'Haiti*, in 1934.

5000 U.S. soldiers in Nicaragua.¹³ The Marines serving as officers in the GN will be the main actors analyzed in the thesis. At times a view to the other USMC detachments will be brought into the story, to show similarities and differences in their approach to the occupation and because until the GN had been fully established they were responsible for the GN's general police duties. The USMC detachments were responsible for maintaining law and order until the GN had been established and could assume those duties. In addition the areas outside of those of the most intensive guerilla war against Sandino's army took place, in essence all the departments of Nicaragua except Nueva Segovia.¹⁴ However, examples from the conflict areas will function as good comparisons and shed light on the areas further away from the combat zones.

Nicaragua, the Nicaraguan, and Nicaraguans will not be analyzed other than as representations of how they were perceived by, or constructed in the minds of, the Marines.

The United States Marine Corps: a very brief history

The United States Marine Corp was originally established as the Continental Marines in November 1775, likely modeled after the British Marines.¹⁵ "Marines [in that period] were basically soldiers detailed for sea service whose primary duties were to fight aboard but not to sail their ships."¹⁶ After a period of disbandment, the USMC was officially established, or reestablished, as the Corps of Marines by an act of the United States Congress July 11, 1798.¹⁷ From its establishment, the Marines primary task was as military police onboard U.S. Navy ships and as guards at the various naval bases. In addition to their Navy tasks, the Marines were to form the backbone of any landing party in foreign countries to protect U.S.

¹³ During the supervised elections there were personnel from the U.S. Army, in addition to the USMC and the Navy; different translations of Sandino's army *Ejército Defensor Soberanía Nacional de Nicaragua* exist, the one I use here is taken from Macaulay, 1998, for the reason that it is the first published which mention it.

¹⁴ In most of the literature the "C" in Sandino's name is believed to signify César, however, a more reasonable account of the history and origin of the "C" is given in Macaulay, 1998, p. 48-49. Here it is stated that Sandino was named Augusto Calderón, an illegitimate child of Margarita Calderón and Don Gregorio Sandino. When his father married, Augusto was allowed to move into his father's house and took the name, Augusto Calderón Sandino. Through primary education he learned that his name, Augusto, was the same as the first Roman emperor and thus he re-designated the "C" from Calderón to César; Schroeder, 1993, p. 328, has a map of all of the battles and the majority of them are in Nueva Segovia or in close proximity to that department.

¹⁵ Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps* 1991, rev. and exp. ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1991), p. 8.

¹⁶ A. Millett, 1991, p. 6.

¹⁷ A. Millett, 1991, p. 28.

lives and property during times of crisis. When the crisis had elapsed the Marines were withdrawn. This policy, called “interposition”, became the most important function in addition to the duties in the Navy.¹⁸ The Spanish-American war of 1898 changed U.S. relations to the rest of the world. This change in foreign policy would impact of the USMC. In this post 1898-era the Marines still performed their duties onboard U.S. Navy ships, on bases, and ashore in foreign countries along the lines of the interposition policy. However, the interposition policy “broadened to become intervention.”¹⁹ Intervention was the act to prevent or alter the outcome of a course of events. An intervention was usually based on the same motive or reasoning as the more temporary interposition, the protection of U.S. lives and property.²⁰ However, with interventions the Marines became responsible for making sure the outcome of hostilities would be a government friendly to U.S. nationals and their interests. Interventions were also employed as a preemptive measure, the U.S. intervened before any other nation intervened. This could imply that the Marines had to remain in a “host country” for months or years to make sure hostilities resulted in an acceptable outcome. Interventions could also broaden and become occupations involving several thousand men staying for several years.²¹ As a rule such occupations had as a consequence that the Marine Corps was engaged in establishing constabularies. The constabularies were combined national police and military forces to displace the former corrupt and undisciplined forces that had at best been a nuisance and at worst a menace to both the foreign elements and the native populations.²²

Historiography

The historical research done on the U.S. occupation of Nicaragua from 1927-1933 is quite limited. In the period which this thesis covers, the war waged against Sandino’s army has remained the only issue of substantial scholarly attention with regards to the occupation.²³ Some of this research, in relation to the war against Sandino’s army, has been very valuable and will be used throughout the thesis. In the next section I will discuss the literature used throughout the thesis and its value and limitations with regard to my thesis.

¹⁸ A. Millett, 1991, p. 148.

¹⁹ A. Millett, 1991, p. 148.

²⁰ This changed somewhat with the Roosevelt corollary to the Monroe doctrine. Both the Roosevelt corollary and Monroe doctrine will be described in more detail in chapter 2.

²¹ A. Millett, 1991, p. 148-149.

²² Dana G. Munro cited in Richard Millett, *Guardians of the Dynasty: A History of the U.S. Created Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua and the Somoza Family* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1977), p. 41.

²³ The Sandinista revolution and the Contras war, 1979-1990, has received the bulk of scholarly attention in recent Nicaraguan historiography.

Michael J. Schroeder

Michael J. Schroeder's Ph.D. dissertation from 1993, *"To Defend Our Nation's Honor": Towards a Social and Cultural History of the Sandino Rebellion in Nicaragua, 1927-1934*,²⁴ and his other research on the cultural and social aspects of this war and rebellion have been valuable, especially his analysis of the Marines' image of self and other in the war. He has drawn on a wide array of contemporary sources and found what he has termed a "racist discourse" among the Marines serving in Nicaragua.²⁵ Schroeder's findings have been useful for my work, even though his main field of study was the violence perpetrated by the Marines vis-a-vis the population of Northern Nicaragua, the Segovias. Schroeder is not concerned with the interrelationship of Marines and Nicaraguan officials, other than in general terms. He concludes that the Marines' difficulties in comprehending the inner workings of caudillismo made them less effective in the war against DANSN. Some of Schroeder's later research, with regards to the occupation, has been useful in a general way. It deals with the occupation in quite general terms, and it does not specifically deal with the theme of this thesis.²⁶

Richard Grossman

Richard Grossman's Ph.D. dissertation from 1996, *"Hermanos en la patria": Nationalism, Honor and Rebellion: Augusto Sandino and the Army in Defense of the National Sovereignty of Nicaragua, 1927-1934*,²⁷ has a wider scope and analyses the failure of the Marines serving

²⁴ Michael Schroeder, *"To Defend Our Nation's Honor": Towards a Social and Cultural History of the Sandino Rebellion in Nicaragua, 1927-1934* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Michigan, 1993).

²⁵ Schroeder, 1993, "Chapter 9: 'Exterminating bandits': Self and Other in the moral imagination of the Marines", 376-424.

²⁶ Michael J. Schroeder's other research valuable for this thesis include: "Horse Thieves to Rebel dogs: Political Gang Violence and the State in the Western Segovias, Nicaragua, in the Time of Sandino, 1926-1934", *Journal of Latin American Studies*. 28 (no. 2, 1996), 383-434; "The Sandino Rebellion Revisited: Civil War, Imperialism, Popular Nationalism, and State Formation Muddled Up Together in the Segovias of Nicaragua, 1926-1934" in *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S. Latin American Relations*, ed. Gilbert M. Joseph, Cathrine C. LeGrand and Richardo D. Salvatore (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 208-268; "'To Induce a Sence of Terror': Caudillo Politics and Political Violence in Northern Nicaragua, 1926-1934 and 1981-1995" in *Death Squads in Global Perspective: Murder with Deniability*, ed. Bruce B. Campbell and Arthur R Brenner (London: MacMillan, 2000), 27-56; Schroeder, *Intelligence Capacities of the U.S. Military in the Sandino Rebellion, Las Segovias, Nicaragua, 1927-1932: Successes, Failures, Lessons* (Commissioned study for the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterrey, CA. 2004), <http://www.sandinorebellion.com/mjs/mjs-intel.htm> (accessed: February 17, 2010)

²⁷ Richard Grossman, *"Hermanos en la patria": Nationalism, Honor and Rebellion: Augusto Sandino and the Army in Defense of the National Sovereignty of Nicaragua, 1927-1934* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Chicago: 1996).

in the GN to establish a professional military organization. Based on Edwin Lieuwen's three criteria of military professionalism:

[F]irst [concentrating on military issues], that the officer corps turned its energies to the exercise and development of military functions; second [nonpolitical], that the armies tended to become servants rather than masters of the state; third [nonpartisan], that their functions became increasingly 'legitimate' military duties of maintaining internal security and defending the country against external aggression.²⁸

Grossman has come to the conclusion that the Marines managed to build a professional military organization, and that the Marine officers concentrated their attention on the GN as a military organization. Secondly he points out that the Marines throughout the occupation maintained a nonpartisan posture.²⁹ They did not side with any party or fraction. Their concern was to uphold the law and the Constitution. They did not, however, succeed in persuading or installing in the GN that to be nonpolitical the military must accept being subordinate to political authority. Grossman argues that the Marines themselves substituted their own judgment for that of the politicians, thus by example undermining the principle of being nonpolitical. Grossman argues this breach of principle by example was installed so thoroughly that it became the heritage of the GN. This heritage formed the basis for the Anastacio Somoza García's rise to power and 43 years of Somoza dynasty rule.

Richard Millett

Historian Richard Millett's *Guardians of Dynasty: A History of the U.S. created Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua and the Somoza Family* published in 1977 discusses the process in which the GN was organized and has been of great value.³⁰ Millett's book covers the period from 1925 to the date of publication in 1977, with the main emphasis on the occupation and the reorganization of the GN. In his analysis of the reestablishment of the GN U.S.-Nicaraguan diplomacy receives considerable attention, including the personal and institutional conflicts and challenges that arose throughout the occupation. Millett concludes that the Marines in the GN made "great strides" towards creating "a disciplined, adequately trained and equipped constabulary." As for the two other objectives Millett analyzed, the Marines did

²⁸ Edwin Lieuwen quoted in Grossman, 1996, 178-179.

²⁹ The Marines, who served in Nicaragua, used impartial and nonpartisan interchangeably.

³⁰ R. Millett, 1977, 79.

not succeed. They did not manage to establish internal order in all of Nicaragua, nor did they make the GN a “nonpolitical force.”³¹

Michel Gobat

Michel Gobat’s book *confronting the American Dream: Nicaragua under U.S. Imperial Rule* was published in 2005 and has been valuable in different ways.³² The book covers the period from the time of Vanderbilt’s *Accessory Transit Company* and William Walker’s attempt to make Nicaragua his own little principality to the end of the 1927-1933 occupation, or the 1912-1933 occupation as Gobat argues. He analyses Nicaraguan culture in relation and response to U.S. imperialism, and has in that regard been very valuable for my understanding of the background of U.S.-Nicaraguan relations. Throughout the book Gobat uses examples from the department of Granada, the conservative stronghold in Nicaragua, as well as more broadly national ones.³³ With regard to the 1927-1933 occupation he examines the way the U.S. was tried to impose democracy and how the U.S. electoral missions represented a calculated assault on caudillismo in order to democratize the rural parts Nicaragua. He specifically discusses how the supervisors’ poor understanding of Nicaraguan caudillismo hampered a more thoroughgoing democratization.

His analysis of the GN in periods when there was not a U.S. electoral supervisory mission emphasizes the GN’s attempts “to dismantle the structures of caudillismo.”³⁴ He bases his findings on U.S. State Department, Nicaraguan, and secondary sources.

Other literature

Neill Macaulay’s *The Sandino Affair* is the classic account of the Marines’ war against Sandino’s army.³⁵ Even though very descriptive at times, it provides, together with William

³¹ Millett’s definition of “nonpolitical” differs from the one Grossman uses. Millett’s definition is a combination of Grossman’s/Lieuwen’s “nonpolitical” and “nonpartisan”; Millett defines a “nonpolitical force” as one “dedicated to defending the constitutional order and guaranteeing free election.”; Millett, 1977, p. 79.

³² Gobat, 2005.

³³ The Granada in Gobat’s analysis refers to the earlier prefecture of Granada covered that, during the occupation, included the departments of Managua, Carazo, Masaya, Granada, and Chontales.

³⁴ Gobat, 2005, 217

³⁵ Macaulay, 1998.

Kamman's *A Search for Stability*, a good background for the analysis and has been especially valuable in contextualizing the sources that provide the basis of this thesis.³⁶

For a better understanding of the economic and political situation in Nicaragua in general, Ralph Lee Woodward's *Central America: A Divided Nation* published in 1999 has been useful.³⁷ With regard to the Central American and Nicaraguan background Victor Bulmer-Thomas' *The Political Economy of Central America*,³⁸ Edelberto Torres Rivas' *History and Society in Central America*³⁹ have been equally valuable. Furthermore they have been valuable in relation to the development of caudillismo. The literature which has been valuable more specifically in relation to caudillismo is William Beezley's general article on the origins and workings of caudillismo and Elizabeth Dore's *Debt Peonage in Granada, Nicaragua*.⁴⁰

Primary sources

The primary sources for this thesis were mainly created by the United States Marine Corps engaged in the occupation, and are located in the U.S. National Archives (USNA), Washington DC, in Record Group 127(RG127). RG127 is divided into entries (E). The entries have a title which may or may not correspond with the content. The entries were sub-divided into numbered boxes and files, explained in more detail below. I have focused on the entries pertaining to the GN and USMC activities in Nicaragua. They contain a wide variety of documents. The bulk of the material, as is the case with the literature, deals with the war against Sandino, the DANSN, and other "bandit" related activities. The finding aids are primitive and do not include an index over individual documents. For most of the entries there is an index for the files, however, they do not always offer any assistance in navigating within entries. Many of the file names are not self-explanatory, such as "235 1932", or a single letter or a number with no further explanation. When there is an actual file name there is not necessarily any logical relationship between the file title and the documents in the file. Others are to the point and the file contains what one could expect from the title, such as

³⁶ William Kamman, *A Search for Stability: U.S. Diplomacy Toward Nicaragua, 1925-1933* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968).

³⁷ Ralph Lee Woodward, Jr., *Central America: A Divided Nation*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

³⁸ Victor Bulmer-Thomas, *The Political Economy of Central America since 1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

³⁹ Edelberto Torres Rivas, *History and Society in Central America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993).

⁴⁰ William H. Beezley, "Caudillismo: An Interpretive Note", *Journal of Inter-American Studies*, 11 (no. 3, 1969), 345-352; Elizabeth Dore, "Debt Peonage in Granada, Nicaragua, 1870-1930: Labor in a Noncapitalist Transition", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 83 (no. 3, 2003), 521-559.

“Recommendations of personnel for higher officer rank in Guardia.” Some of the entries do not even have an index of the folders, but only a short description of the documents or types of documents that were located in the entry. Some documents from the occupation of Haiti were in these records and the records of the GN and USMC 2nd brigade were mixed in most of the entries viewed. Some records of the electoral supervisory mission are in the records as well.

The most valuable sources are the Monthly Records of Events (MRE).⁴¹ They are reports containing certain pre-determined points; Strength of Command, Military operations, Police conditions, Intelligence, Training, Confiscation of Arms, and Miscellaneous. The intelligence point in the reports include the general state of the territory, relations between the GN and civilian population and local officials, economic conditions, conditions of the roads and communications, and weather. The reports were not produced according to any standardized format and vary greatly in content. In some of the cases predetermined points are reported in a single word or short phrases, “quite”, “nothing to report”, “same”, or “slight improvement” while others state basically the same or a very similar condition, but the report of the condition in question is given over two typed pages.⁴² This difference in form and content applies to how and what the Marines interpreted as relevant to report, whether it was the political situation in general or the political situation with specific relation the GN. These differences in content and interpretation of the predetermined points in the reports make a statistical presentation or quantitative analysis difficult. However, when statements relating to similar conditions are possible to quantify this will be noted in terms of being more common, or occur more often than other statements, or frequently. Frequently being the most frequent.

The MREs were not created until January 1930. Similar weekly reports only occur occasionally prior to that. The MREs are available in full for nine of the twelve GN departments from January 1930 to the end of the occupation.⁴³ In addition there are for the

⁴¹ Some of these reports were headed “Events, Monthly record of” or “record of monthly events.” For simplicity’s sake all of these reports will be refereed to and abbreviated “MRE”, in the footnotes and text.

⁴² The reports with statement referring to previous conditions occasionally will require the researcher to backtrack several months to get a reference to what “slight improvement” or “same” was, since the equal or similar statements occur several months in a row.

⁴³ Some in the earlier part of the occupation were weekly reports with very similar content as the MREs; even though there was 13 departments in Nicaragua during the occupation, two GN departments covered two Nicaraguan departments. The combined departments were: Managua-Carazo and Granada-Masaya. The department of Bluefields was divided into two GN departments for administrative purposes, Northern

same period, January 1930- December 1932, MREs for the Eastern and Central Areas and the Police Company of Managua, as well as the odd one from a district or post. In addition to the MREs other reports pertaining to other special situations, such as municipal elections and civil unrest have been valuable.

From a critical perspective it is not unlikely that the individual GN officer would try to emphasize episodes, actions, or conditions which they thought the intended reader of a report would value, usually their superior. In a similar fashion it is not unlikely that they would understate episodes, actions, or conditions they thought the intended reader would disapprove of. Thus one can assume that the statement, if it is not completely honest, represents an attempt to adapt the statements to what reporters think will be valued by their superiors. Since the reports were written for fellow Marines, it is not likely that the Marines tailored their statements to what was considered appropriate for the public to know.

The Julian C. Smith et al.'s, *A review of the Organization and the Operations of the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua: By Direction of the Major General Commandant of the United States Marine Corps*,⁴⁴ is one of the primary sources of the thesis. It is an "official" account of the GN while it was under U.S. leadership. Published four years after the withdrawal, in 1937, it was written by commissioned officers and enlisted men of the USMC who all served in the GN during the occupation. Their representation clearly emphasizes harmony between the GN, its officers and enlisted, and the occupied country and population. Smith et al. has been valuable as to the how the GN was organized. It has given an insight into what was considered appropriate attitudes for the public. Its greatest value has been to give almost encyclopedic information as to who held the different positions within the GN during the occupation. Written for "both the military student and the general reader" it is not unlikely that the more compromising accounts and conditions relating to the U.S. organization of the GN have been left out. Smith et al. has included several original documents as appendices to the report.

Bluefields (included the comerca of Cabo Gracias a Dios) and Southern Bluefields. The departments missing were Nueva Segovia (the most war ridden department), Matagalpa, and León, in the Western Area.

⁴⁴ Julian C. Smith et al. *A review of the Operations and Organization of the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua: By Direction of the Major General Commandant of the United states Marine Corps* (Quantico: Marine Corps School, 1937).

U.S. government publications in relation to and covering the occupation have been used as sources.⁴⁵ Henry L. Stimson's *American Policy in Nicaragua*, originally published in 1927, in defense of the U.S. brokered peace agreement and policy in Nicaragua are sources for the thesis.⁴⁶ As with Smith et al.'s account they were made available to the public and thus may tend to exaggerate harmony and play down conflicts or unfavorable situations that make the Americans appear in an unfavorable light.

Concepts

In the following sections certain concepts will be defined and given relatively concise meaning.

Occupation

Intervention, as defined above, is the act of an outside power to prevent or alter the outcome of potentially threatening situation in a country or territory. By the post-1898 decades intervention as the U.S. saw was the process in which the U.S. tried to alter the outcome of internal affairs of a country before someone else did. David M. Edelstein defines occupation as "the temporary control of a territory by another state that claims no right to permanent sovereign control over that territory,"⁴⁷ and that its main objective "is to secure the interests of the occupying power and prevent the occupied territory from becoming a source of instability [as perceived by the occupying power]."⁴⁸ Even though other objectives, such as nation building, liberal democracy or a successful economy, have been emphasized, and it could be argued are more altruistic than strict security occupation. The security interests of the occupying country is always present while the others objectives are not necessarily. The other objectives might be considered means to the greater end. That of "prevent[ing] the occupied territory from becoming a source of instability", but in more of a long term perspective or with more than strictly security objectives.⁴⁹ Based on this one can categorize all occupations as either security occupations or comprehensive occupations.⁵⁰ When the object is strictly

⁴⁵ These are: United States Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*

⁴⁶ I have used a 1991 reprint of Henry L. Stimson, "American Policy in Nicaragua", in *Henry L. Stimson's American Policy in Nicaragua: The Lasting Legacy* (New York: Markus Wiener Publishing, 1991), 1-54.

⁴⁷ David M. Edelstein, "Occupational Hazards: Why Military Occupations Succeed and Fail", *International Security*, 29 (no. 1, 2004), 49-91, p. 52.

⁴⁸ Edelstein, 2004, p. 50.

⁴⁹ Edelstein, 2005, p. 50.

⁵⁰ Edelstein, 2005, p. 53-54.

security it will be classified as a security occupation, and when other objectives are present the occupation will be classified as comprehensive. To use the same logic as with interventions vs. occupations; all comprehensive occupations are security occupations, while the opposite is not the case.

Marine perceptions

Since the purpose of this thesis is to examine the Marines perceptions of their role in the occupation of Nicaragua, what they perceived to be their most important tasks during the occupation, culture will be the best way of assessing this. Culture can be defined in many ways, Clifford Geertz defines it as “webs of significance he [mankind] himself has spun, [...] and the analysis of it is [...] an interpretive one in search of meaning.”⁵¹ This definition does not say anything other than that human beings have culture, that human beings have created it, and without human beings there would be no culture.

An analogy of culture as a very complex electrical field may better explain what culture amounts to. The electrical field does not have any clearly defined boundaries and may spread in all directions. Human activity is equal to the current creating an electrical field, without human activity there is no culture. Thus culture amounts to what human beings at any given time think, feel, say, and do.⁵² According to Thomas Hylland Eriksen “culture” can be defined as “what makes communication possible”, if culture is able to spread in all directions.⁵³ This makes language a very important part of culture and would make people with speaking the same language more capable of communicating with each other. However, two people with the same mother tongue do not necessarily have the same experiences, values, or interests and may thus be very limited in their ability to communicate with each other, despite a language. On the other hand, two people with no common language will to a certain extent be able to communicate because of common experiences, values, or interests.

Americanization

“Americanization” refers to two distinct processes of cultural transfer. The first concerns the process of assimilating a foreign culture, or cultural entity, into the American. This could be applied to an immigrant when he/she has become an American as opposed to a Scandinavian

⁵¹ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 5.

⁵² Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Kulturelle Veikryss: Essays om kreolisering* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1994), p. 23.

⁵³ Eriksen, 1994, p. 23.

or Japanese.⁵⁴ The second refers to the reverse process, an American cultural entity being absorbed or assimilated into the culture of the host or recipient country, making that culture more American.⁵⁵ Helge Danielsen has pointed out the paradox that both of these processes, export of American cultural elements to a host culture and the reverse process of import of foreign elements into the American culture are dubbed Americanization.⁵⁶ This could imply that what we are looking for here could be a “Nicaraguanization” or “Central-Americanization” of American cultural elements.⁵⁷ However, since Nicaragua is an American country it and could, by its geographical location, be considered Americanized in its own right. Thus in order to gain some clarity as to the meaning of the process of cultural transfer from the Marines to Nicaragua it will be termed “North-Americanization”. Since the creation of the GN and the process was U.S. initiated “Nicaraguanization” would not be as precise. In addition it was Nicaragua which went through a change to become more “North-American” and not the U.S. which was to become more Nicaraguan or Central American. The process of “North-Americanizing”, or rather how the Marines viewed the Nicaraguans ability to “North-Americanize” will be discussed specifically in chapter 5.

Structure of the thesis

In this first chapter I have put forward a brief outline of the purpose of this thesis and a summary of the research literature of the occupation. In the second chapter will present the historical background and necessary references for further reading. First a brief outline of the Nicaraguan political, geographical, and economic conditions and how they were at the time the occupation. Secondly I will give an account of U.S. – Nicaraguan relations from about 1900 to the beginning of the occupation.

The core of my thesis is chapters 3, 4, and 5. They are structured by theme. The third chapter will be the base for the following two chapters (chapters 4 and 5), and will set the premises for the rest of the thesis. It describes and discusses what the Marines were, what being a Marine in the post-1898 era amounted to. Then we will see how this culture came across in

⁵⁴ Peter A. Speek, “The Meaning of Nationality and Americanization”. *The American Journal of Sociology*. 32, (no. 2, 1926), 237-249, p. 249.

⁵⁵ Hallvard Notaker, *Coming across: The Norwegian Conservative Party and the import of overseas campaign events for the media, 1986-1989* (Oslo: Unipub, 2008), p. 19.

⁵⁶ Helge Danielsen, “The American Spirit in Europe Revisited?”, *Contemporary European History*, 17 (no. 1, 2008), 117-126, p. 121.

⁵⁷ The reasoning here is equal to Notaker, 2008, p. 20.

their perception of Nicaragua, how they constructed “the Nicaraguan”, and what they considered to be the problem they had come to Nicaragua to solve. Finally in this chapter we will see how the Marines interpreted their role in relation to their different tasks during the occupation, with regards to law and order, the improving economy, and establishing and leading the GN.

Chapter 4 will examine the Marines’ encounter with Nicaraguan political culture of caudillismo and how the Marines tried to maneuver within it, discussing the strategies the Marines used in the encounter with the caudillismo. This will include an examination of municipal election and Nicaraguan law enforcement agencies, both outside and within GN control. The final chapter in the core of the thesis, chapter 5, will examine how successful the Marines felt they had been “North-Americanizing” the Nicaraguans, and what factors might have shaped this perception.

2. Historical Background

During the years preceding the 1926-27 intervention and subsequent occupation U.S.-Nicaraguan relations had been troubled. Several interventions, both militarily and economically, and the relations had geopolitical implications.

In this chapter I shall present an outline of key political, racial, economic, and geographical factors that had formed the Nicaraguan state, its population and its politics by the time the U.S. Marines entered Nicaragua in August 1926. In addition to purely Nicaraguan conditions a brief description of the US-Nicaraguan relations from about the turn of the 20th century to the U.S. intervention in the Civil War of 1926/27 will be important to understand why the U.S. chose to intervene and occupy Nicaragua. The U.S. brokered peace and the events that led up to it will be given a more thorough examination as this was the agreement which established the GN and made the Marine presence possible.

Nicaragua: a divided nation

Even before independence from Spain in 1821, Nicaragua was divided politically, economically, racially, and geographically. These divisions were had evolved and were present at the time of the U.S. occupation.

Political and economic divisions

Politically the dividing line ran between the Liberals in the city of León, located between Lake Managua and the Pacific Coast, and the Conservatives in the city of Granada, on the northern shore of Lake Nicaragua.¹ This rivalry between the two cities had existed almost as long as there had been Europeans in Nicaragua. After independence recurring revolts and revolutions had led these two cities into violent struggle for the political leadership. The capital was moved back and forth between the two cities depending on who was in power, until the capital was permanently moved to Managua in 1851.

¹ Both cities were established by the same *conquistador*, Spanish conqueror, Francisco Hernández de Cordoba in 1524, Granada first then two months later León

The Conservatives had most of their economic interest in the area surrounding Lake Nicaragua in cattle raising and trade, and were generally friendlier to the Catholic Church.² The Conservatives position in trade came from their location around Lake Nicaragua. From their stronghold in Granada they had across the lake a river navigable which emptied into the Atlantic. They had established this position during the colonial period and sought to uphold this colonial order.³ The support of the Church was not necessarily a case where they supported the Church in all of its teachings, but the church's function as social conservative institution was important. The Liberals tended to be more anti-clerical, in favor of more liberal trade policies, and generally friendlier towards the lower classes.⁴ The anti-clerical stand was rooted in a desire for more secular society. However, equally important was the desire to make more arable land available for cash crops such as coffee. The Church owned large areas of arable land which the Liberals wanted their hands on. The desire to privatize land owned by corporate entities impacted the Indigenous tribes in Nicaragua also, as they owned their land communally.

Despite these underlying ideological differences between Conservatives and Liberals their policies were very similar, and the struggle between the two was more over power than real political differences.⁵

Racial divisions

Both major political parties were structured around families of Spanish descent, also called Creoles. The Spanish Creoles were descendants of the elements of the Spanish Aristocracy which settled after the conquest from the 1520's onward. They were very racist and as a rule they did not intermarry, socialize, or in other ways relate with the other groups of the population.⁶ The Creoles traditionally resided in the cities on the Pacific plains. At the time of the occupation they were made up about 17% of the countries' population. They controlled

² Macaulay, 1998, p. 20.

³ Gobat, 2005, p. 25.

⁴ Macaulay, 1998, p. 21 and Woodward, 1999, p. 93.

⁵ Gobat, 2005, p. 25. and Carlos M. Vilas, "Family Affairs: Class, Lineage and Politics in Contemporary Nicaragua", *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 24 (no. 2, 1992), 309-341, p. 311.

⁶ Carlos M. Vilas, 1992, p. 312-313 cites that especially the Conservative Party members were less accepting of Anastacio Somoza García's rise to power. His methods did not conform to the traditional ways of handling things, and he was as a Mestizo and not a part of the traditional elite. His father was one of the middling farmers in Nicaragua, and had a few good years of coffee harvest enabling him to send Anastacio to attend school in the U.S. Gobat, 2005, argues that Mena was not fully accepted in the uppermost Granada-elite because he had too dark a complexion.

most of the trade and communications with the outside world and were accepted as the dominant political group.⁷ The richest of them sent of their children to U.S. or European/Spanish universities. Thus they had most of the cultural power in addition to most of the political and economic power in Nicaragua.⁸

The Mestizos, also called *Ladinos*, were any mixture of Indigenous-American and European. Some of them had positions in the political parties, however, usually not in the uppermost elite. The Mestizos comprised the bulk, about 71%, of the population.⁹ They comprised the lower elements of the Nicaraguan society. Some managed to rise in the political parties, especially the Liberal party, and could have political positions. The artisans and other skilled labor in the cities had some influence on politics and could tip the scales in revolts and uprising.

Indigenous descendants of the people who lived in Nicaragua prior to the European colonization in the 1520's made up 3% of the population. Their communities were located on the outskirts of the Pacific plains, the Northern highlands and the jungles between the Pacific plain and the Atlantic Coast. On the Mosquito Coast there was a considerable element of African-American, which made up about 9% of the total population of Nicaragua.

Geographic divisions

The western plain where the population was the densest was where most Nicaraguans lived. The plains were relatively fertile, however, much of the land was used only as pastures. On the Mosquito Coast, the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua running from Cabo Gracias a Dios to the outlet of Rio San Juan, was separated from the rest of Nicaragua by rain forest, jungle and had never been connected to the rest of Nicaragua by anything other than rivers.¹⁰ The Mosquito Coast was not only geographically isolated from the rest of Nicaragua. Racially and culturally the Mosquito Coast was distinct as well. It was a British protectorate from 1678 to 1894. At first as a hideaway for British buccaneers and privateers, during the 18th and 19th century British merchants had settled on the coast to pursue mining, timber trade, and other commodities such as dyes. The British had brought with them African-American labor from

⁷ Vilas, 1996, p. 311.

⁸ All of the percentages are taken from Stimson, 1991, p. 2.

⁹ On the western plains they were an even greater majority

¹⁰ This was still the situation in 2008 that Bluefields, the main city on the Mosquito Coast and the western part of Nicaragua, was not connected by passable road.

the Caribbean, first as slaves in the 18th century and from around 1900 as manual labor in the banana trade.¹¹ The indigenous tribes living on the Mosquito Coast had to a certain degree been displaced by the European settlers. However, they intermixed with the African-Americans and most of them spoke English.

The Northern Highlands were distinct as well. This mountainous region forms almost a wedge between the Mosquito Coast in the east and the Pacific planes in the west. In this part of the country Indigenous communities were stronger, and thus the Conservatives had a political hegemony. The anti-clericalism of the Liberals was mainly rooted in the desire to dissolve the communal or corporate property rights. This would influence the Indigenous communities especially. They owned their lands communally and thus their rights were under attack in the attempt to make more land available for private owning.

U.S.-Nicaraguan Relations ca. 1900-1927

The United States has intervened in Nicaragua more often than in any other country in Central America. The reasons for intervention have varied over time. During the period when the U.S. was surveying and making plans to build an interoceanic canal, two competing routes were considered, for the construction of the canal. The two routes considered possible went across Nicaragua and the other across Panama. The U.S. Walker commission, established to evaluate the two viable routes, favored the Nicaraguan route because it was less expensive.¹² The Nicaraguan route would cost USD189 million to develop while the Panamanian route would cost USD258million, including the USD109million to purchase the already begun canal from the *New Panama Canal Company*.¹³

However, the Nicaraguan president José Santos Zelaya was not willing to surrender civil jurisdiction to the U.S. in the proposed Canal Zone.¹⁴ This was not the case with Panama, who two weeks prior to signing the canal treaty with the U.S. had declared their independence from Colombia. Thus it is not unlikely that the new Panamanian government was willing to cede the necessary sovereignty in return for protection, in the case the Colombia would

¹¹ Macaulay, 1998, p. 186-187.

¹² Walter LaFeber, *The Panama Canal: The Crisis in Historical Perspective*, updated ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 15.

¹³ These numbers are taken from Thomas M. Leonard, *Central America and the United States* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991), p. 52.

¹⁴ T.M. Leonard, 1991, p. 53.

attempt to reoccupy Panama.¹⁵ Additionally New Panama Canal Company lowered the asking price for the abandoned attempt to construct a canal to USD40million. Thus the Panamanian route became less expensive than the Nicaraguan route.¹⁶ Several other logistical and geographical factors entered into the equation. There had throughout the process of choosing a site for the inter-oceanic canal been some doubts about the suitability of the Nicaraguan route. The San Juan River, running along the Costa Rica-Nicaraguan border to Lake Nicaragua, had been considered too shallow to support a canal. This in addition to the already established trans-isthmian railway across Panama, which would ease construction the choice was made even easier. New Panama Canal Company, as an extra precaution, made a contribution, through their U.S. legal representative to the Republican Party only days prior to the vote which would decide the location of the canal.¹⁷

“Panama policy”

The decision to use the Panamanian route for the location of the inter-oceanic canal would impact U.S. foreign policy in a number of ways. The states in the region bordering the canal and its approaches would also experience the consequences of the geopolitical changes attendant upon the construction of the canal. The canal’s importance in the formation of the policy towards the countries in this region was so great that the policy by some have been called “Panama policy”.¹⁸ German and British naval forces in 1902-03 had engaged in a blockade and bombardment of Venezuela’s coast. Venezuela had defaulted on their debt payments to their creditors and the *The Hague’s Court of Permanent Arbitration* upheld creditor nations’ right to collect by force loans which had been defaulted.¹⁹ In order to avoid further situations in close proximity to the Panama Canal, such as had been the case in Venezuela, the U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt announced a corollary to the Monroe doctrine. In 1823 as response to the recent independence of Spanish America the U.S. stated that in the case a European country intervened in the internal affairs of an independent country in the Western Hemisphere, the U.S. would interpret it as an attack on the U.S.

¹⁵ LaFeber, 1993, p. 37.

¹⁶ T.M. Leonard, 1991, p. 52-54 and Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993), p. 38.

¹⁷ LaFeber, 1989, p. 16; the donation amounted to USD60000; there has been some speculation that there was considerable corruption and bribes by the New Panama Canal Company to members of the U.S. Congress in order to make sure the Panamanian route got chosen, according to Melvin Small, *Democracy & Diplomacy: The Impact of Domestic Politics on U.S. Foreign Policy, 1798-1994* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 34.

¹⁸ Samuel Flagg Bemis quoted in Kamman, 1968, p. 8.

¹⁹ T.M. Leonard, 1991, p. 57.

itself.²⁰ The Roosevelt corollary to this doctrine practically stated that in the case of a country in the Western Hemisphere was not aware that its interests and U.S.' interests were identical, the U.S. had to take on the role of being the "hemispheric" police officer. This did not only apply to the countries' foreign policies. In the case their internal affairs threatened the stability of the region the U.S. would intervene to straighten them out.²¹ The Latin American and Caribbean countries had to conform their policies to U.S. interests, or run the risk of being "policed" by the U.S.

All of the canal's approaches were to be kept open. The U.S. intervened in several countries in the region and established naval bases at strategic locations. The occupations of Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic can all be seen as attempts to protect the Panama Canal.²² This would impact Nicaragua also, its geographical proximity to the canal was important, but since Nicaragua was the location of the other viable route for an inter-oceanic canal the choice of the Panamanian route would impact the U.S. policy towards Nicaragua especially. A competing canal could impact the profitability of the Panama Canal, and perhaps even more important the U.S. would lose its strategic advantage of controlling the only inter-oceanic canal.

The U.S. interventions in 1909 and 1912

Relations between the U.S. and Nicaragua rapidly deteriorated in the years after the selection of the Panama route.²³ Nicaraguan president Zelaya was not as forthcoming towards foreign economic interests as were the other Central American governments. This was most visible in his stricter enforcement of national laws and regulations towards foreign economic interests, especially on the Mosquito Coast.²⁴ Zelaya was no less eager to attract foreign capital to Nicaragua than the other Central American countries were, but he would not allow Nicaragua to assume such a heavy debt burden as he observed that neighborly states had taken on.²⁵ Zelaya revoked concessions for the mining and lumber industry and land leases for the

²⁰ LaFeber, 1993, p. 38.

²¹ Edmund Morris, *Theodore Rex* (New York: Random House, 2001), p. 326.

²² Naval bases were established at in all three Caribbean countries, Guantanamo (Cuba), Môle St. Nicole (Haiti), and Samana (Dominican Republic). The U.S. even got leases in the Corn Islands, to establish naval bases as well as the Nicaraguan part of Gulf de Fonseca; the annexation of the Hawaii and occupation of the Philippines may also be interpreted as attempts by the U.S. to secure the Pacific approaches to the future canal.

²³ T.M. Leonard, 1991, p. 54.

²⁴ Woodward, 1999, p. 195.

²⁵ Woodward, 1999, p. 195-6.

foreign owned banana estates. The raising of export and import taxes on certain goods particularly reduced the profitability of the foreign companies. This evoked strong feelings among the foreign business men on the Mosquito Coast. In addition there were rumors that Zelaya had been in contact with the Japanese government in connection with the construction of a competing inter-oceanic canal.²⁶

When a rebellion started in Bluefields in 1909, the largest city on the Mosquito Coast, the U.S. government quickly gave its moral support to the insurgents. The rebellion was led by dissident Liberal and Zelaya appointed *Jefe Politico* Juan B. Estrada. The rebellion was supported by the Conservatives and the U.S. and foreign business community, which collected large sums of money for the support of the rebellion. This enabled the insurgents to hire U.S. mercenaries. While attempting to sink one of Zelaya governments troop transporters, two U.S. mercenaries were captured and later executed.²⁷ This was the cause the U.S. needed to intervene in the rebellion. The Nicaraguan government was not conforming its interests to those of the U.S., and U.S. lives were at risk, and had been lost. Shortly thereafter a contingent of U.S. Marines was dispatched from Panama Canal Zone and set ashore in Bluefields to protect lives and property of the expatriate community. They established a safe haven for the insurgents and soon the tide in the rebellion turned. Zelaya resigned as president, but his replacement Madriz was not to the American's liking since he had been hand-picked by Zelaya. Thus his ties to the former government were too close.²⁸ The rebellion continued with the financial aid of the U.S. business community and finally prevailed in August 1910. With the victory of the insurgents, their leader, Liberal dissident Juan B. Estrada was elected president. However, Estrada had problems consolidating his government, and resigned in May 1911.²⁹ The success of the rebellion he led was mostly due to the intervention of the U.S. Marine Corps and not due to the strength of the rebellion itself. Estrada, as a Liberal, was not a part of the traditional Granada-based Conservative elite. He had built his wealth during the agro-export boom of the 1890's and did not have a sufficient power base to stay in office.³⁰ Estrada was succeeded by the Conservative Adolfo Díaz.³¹

²⁶ T.M. Leonard, 1991, p. 61.

²⁷ T.M. Leonard, 1991, p. 61-62.

²⁸ T.M. Leonard, 1991, p. 61-62.

²⁹ Gobat, 2005, p. 80.

³⁰ Gobat, 2005, p. 80.

³¹ T.M. Leonard, 1991, p. 63.

During the summer of 1912 crops failed because of draught and the price of food soared. The urban artisans were of the opinion that this food shortage was the result of poor economic policies by the Díaz government.³² Unrests and protest against soaring food prices fuelled the traditional elite conflicts and led to a rebellion with a much wider appeal.³³ Led by Luis Mena, Díaz' former minister of war, the rebellion quickly gained momentum. Reports that the rebellion was out of control and that U.S. and foreign lives and property was in danger, made the U.S. government send in U.S. Marines once more, to straighten out the internal affairs of Nicaragua.³⁴ This time the U.S. sent a regiment helped the government forces stem the rebellion's advance and drove them back. The final battle took place near to the city of Masaya where the rebellion was crushed.³⁵ After the rebellion the U.S. decided to leave a legation guard of about 100 Marines, to discourage revolutions, protect the legation and other U.S. interest in case a new rebellion was to form.³⁶ This legation guard has been given much of the credit for the peaceful period that followed the 1912 rebellion and lasted until their withdrawal in August 1925.³⁷

Towards the end of the 1912-1925 period the U.S. government attempted to establish a constabulary, a combined police and military force, modeled after the similar forces the U.S. had established in the other countries it had intervened. The success of this first attempt at establishing *Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua* was very limited. It was hampered by the fact that the U.S. and Nicaraguan governments could not agree on the issues of leadership structure, partisanship, and allegiance.³⁸

Chamorro's *coup d'état*, Civil war and U.S. intervention

In the Nicaraguan Presidential elections 1924, the coalition ticket of Conservative Carlos Solórzano and Liberal Juan B. Sacasa was elected. The coalition government quickly showed

³² The summer (Spanish: *verano*) in Nicaragua is from December to April.

³³ Gobat, 2005, p. 96-98 and p. 100-101.

³⁴ Gobat, 2005, p. 103.

³⁵ It was during this 1912 rebellion that the Nicaraguan saying "*Esta dijo Mena*" (This Mena said) came into existence. When Mena said he would never capitulate or give in to U.S. pressure. However, after a meeting with U.S. representatives he decided to give up the fight and left Benjamin Zelodón to fight the U.S. and government forces unsupported. Zelodón lost and is said to have inspired Augusto C. Sandino in his fight against the U.S. led forces 1927-1933. The saying is still in use in contemporary Nicaragua with the meaning that refers to Mena's betrayal of Zelodón and complete lack of integrity.

³⁶ Dana G. Munro, *The United States and the Caribbean Republics 1921-1933* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 158 and Woodward, 1999, p. 197.

³⁷ R. Millett, 1977, p. 41.

³⁸ R. Millett, 1977, p. 42-3.

its fragility. Neither political party was completely satisfied with the new government, as they believed the other party was awarded to many of the spoils of government. Within two months of the departure of the last Marine attached to the legation guard, in August 1925, the Conservatives, presumably from the start led by Emiliano Chamorro, staged a *coup d'état*.³⁹ Through political and legal measures Chamorro was formally sworn in as president in March 1926.⁴⁰ The Liberals did not immediately confront the coup with armed resistance, since they were expecting the U.S. to follow up on their assurances, in connection with the 1923 Central American treaty, that they would only support constitutionally elected governments. This was backed up by the somewhat ambiguous U.S. guarantees that they would not allow attempts at destabilizing Central America, mostly because of their own strategic interests in the Panama Canal.⁴¹ The ambiguities of this guarantee became visible in the fact that the U.S. only withheld recognition of Chamorro's government.⁴² This was less than the Liberals had expected.

In early May 1926 the Liberals took up arms and quickly gained momentum, especially on the Mosquito Coast, and captured several important cities.⁴³ The Mosquito Coast was the region in Nicaragua where there was the most U.S. investments. On May 6th, 1926, the U.S. deployed Marines and U.S. Navy sailors in Bluefields in order to protect U.S. and foreign lives and property through the establishment of "neutral zones". The neutral zone was similar to the policy of interposition. Marines or sailors were not to interfere with the fighting, except when it threatened U.S. or foreign lives or property.⁴⁴ The neutral zone differed from the interposition policy in the manner that whole areas and towns were declared neutral. This implied that armed Nicaraguans either had to leave the zone or turn over their arms to the U.S. troops.⁴⁵ Once U.S. troops established neutral zones on the Mosquito Coast, the rebellion moved west. In October 1916 the U.S. tried to negotiate a peace treaty between the two

³⁹ Kamman, 1968, p. 38-39; Emiliano Chamorro had conveniently retired to one of his estates, "solely interested in agricultural chores", when the first actions were taken to dispose of the Liberals which had been appointed to Carlos Solorzanos cabinet.

⁴⁰ Kamman, 1968, p. 19 and p. 35.

⁴¹ T.M. Leonard, 1991, p. 81-2

⁴² Kamman, 1968, p. 38-47.

⁴³ Kamman, 1968, p. 58-9.

⁴⁴ Kamman, 1968, p. 84.

⁴⁵ Kamman, 1968, p. 58.

warring factions in Nicaragua. However, the only achievement was that former president Adolfo Díaz was appointed president by the Nicaraguan Congress.⁴⁶

The Stimson Mission

During the spring of 1927, the U.S. intervened to make sure the Civil war would not continue. President Calvin Coolidge sent Henry L. Stimson, a former army colonel and future secretary of state, to negotiate a peace agreement the U.S. could accept.⁴⁷ As Stimson wrote:

[T]he women of all parties we met, without exception, were against the war. Even close relatives of prominent revolutionaries were outspoken in their demand that their kin should not allow legal or constitutional questions stand in the way of a fair compromise and an early peace. [...] Unless the war could be stopped in time for planting the new crop in June, another whole agricultural year would be lost.⁴⁸

Officially Stimson used utilitarian arguments for the U.S.' self-appointment to negotiator. However, other strategic and economic arguments were more important than the Stimson's utilitarian ones. The Mexican government had been aiding the Liberals throughout the war and the U.S. had to settle the conflict, unless they were prepared to lose its hegemony in Central America.⁴⁹

Almost immediately Stimson decided that the U.S. hand-picked President Adolfo Díaz was to remain in office until a new could be elected in the 1928 election.⁵⁰ The Conservatives were the first Stimson discussed the situation with and they decided to begin negotiation along the following points:

1. immediate peace, in time for the new crop, and delivery of arms simultaneously by both parties to American custody;
2. general amnesty, and return of exiles and confiscated property;
3. participation of representative Liberals in Díaz's cabinet;
4. organization on a non-partisan basis of a Nicaraguan constabulary commanded by American officers;

⁴⁶ Kamman, 1968, p. 67.

⁴⁷ Macaulay, 1998, p. 32; Calvin Coolidge was U.S. president 1923-1929, first succeeding Warren G. Harding upon his sudden death, the being elected for the term 1925-1929; Taft was president 1909-1913.

⁴⁸ Stimson, 1991, p. 23.

⁴⁹ Richard V. Salisbury, "Mexico, the United States, and the 1926-1927 Nicaraguan Crisis", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 66 (no. 2, 1986), 319-339, p. 320.

⁵⁰ Macaulay, 1998, p. 34; Stimson's reasons for retaining Díaz...

5. supervision of the election in 1928 and succeeding years by Americans, who have ample police power;
6. continuance, temporarily, of a force of Marines sufficient to make the foregoing effective.⁵¹

These six points were the basic ones of the final settlement. The final three in effect established a U.S. occupation of Nicaragua. The third point stipulated that Díaz would remain president, as it was Liberal representation in Díaz' cabinet. The liberals were willing to accept these terms, except the one pertaining to Díaz remaining in office until the 1928 election. This seemed to be an important point for Stimson, Díaz had shown through the 1912 intervention and succeeding years that he was a "trusted collaborator" of the U.S.⁵² The Liberals reluctance to accept Díaz was a partisan issue and who one could expect would be appointed to office, not about politics in Stimson's opinion and would be the point which would break of negotiations. However, according to Stimson the Liberals accepted the peace treaty, with Díaz as president, when they received written assurances that the U.S. would supervise the 1928 presidential elections.

Conclusion

When the Marines arrived in Nicaragua, they met a country divided in many ways. Politically the country was divided between Conservatives and Liberals, even though the real political differences were not that great. Racially the country was divided between the Spanish Creoles, who had most of the power. The Mestizos, who were part of all the classes except the uppermost elite, exercised some political power. In addition there were small groups of Indigenous tribes and imported African-American labor. When the Marines arrived in Nicaragua, the political relations between the U.S. and Nicaragua became very strained when the U.S. chose to construct the inter-oceanic across Panama. The U.S. intervened several times in Nicaragua in the years after the Panama route was selected to protect its investment in Panama and its strategic control over the only inter-oceanic canal. When the civil war of 1926-27 once again threatened the security of U.S. investments and the stability in the region close to the Panama Canal the U.S. negotiated a peace treaty between the two warring factions which in effect established the U.S. occupation of Nicaragua.

⁵¹ Kamman, 1968, p. 101.

⁵² Macaulay, 1998, p. 35.

3. “A sorry country and a sorry people”

The Marines serving in Nicaragua 1927-1933, were some of the last in the post-1898 era to be part of an occupation. A. Millett has termed the occupation of Nicaragua “The End of an Era.”¹

In this chapter the Marines culture as it pertains to the occupation will be examined. We may - assume that their training and professional outlook might have shaped their view Nicaragua of and its inhabitants. First what their background from the USMC amounted to and how that possibly shaped their world view and how it is possible to characterize the Marines as a group. Second their view of Nicaragua and the Nicaraguans will be examined. Finally I will outline how the Marines interpreted their different tasks during the occupation.

The Marines

In the first couple of decades of the twentieth century the USMC recruited with catch-phrases such as, “First to Fight”, “Want to fight! Join the marines” and “From the Spanish Main to the Orient.”² Service in the post-1898 era was seen as adventurous, but the new USMC did not only offer the recruits an opportunity to see exotic places of the world. The post-1898 Marine was a warrior, fighting “native[s]” and “bandit[s]” across “the tropics”.³ The U.S. public considered service in the USMC as a journey from boyhood to manhood. “[The American people] believe about the Marines is that our Corps is downright good for the manhood of our country; that the Marines are masters of an unfailing alchemy which converts unoriented youths into proud, self-reliant stable citizens[...] whose hands the nation may safely be entrusted.”⁴ In order to convert “unoriented youths”, the Marines Corps attempted to transform their recruits by “developing, enhancing, diminishing, and eliminating certain traits and qualities.”⁵ If a recruit was not able to acquire the desired qualities of a Marine he was

¹ A. Millett, 1991, p. 236-263.

² A. Millett, 1991, p. 175.

³ A. Millett, 1991, p. 175 and Schroeder, 1993, p. 382.

⁴ Lt. Gen. Victor H. Krulak (USMC), cited in Adrian R. Lewis, *The American Culture of War: The History of U.S. Military Force from WWII to Operation Iraqi Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 15.

⁵ Lewis, 2007, p. 15.

dismissed.⁶ However, what were these qualities that the USMC tried to develop, enhance, diminish, and eliminate to make a Marine?

The making of a Marine

The USMC tried to sever certain ties the Marines had to civilian society. This did not imply that the Corps did not want the Marines to have families or not to be able to function in civilian society. On the contrary, many of the Marines who served in the occupation forces in the Caribbean, and Central America brought along their families to stay with them on sight.⁷ However, certain ways of thinking and being had to be erased from the minds of the recruits. They had to assume a new identity, a new way of imagining themselves, primarily as a U.S. Marine. Through rigorous physical training, harsh discipline, and socializing with veteran Marines the recruits were formed to embrace the USMC and its mantra *semper fidelis*, always faithful.⁸ They were to be always faithful to their flag.⁹ Not exclusively, but especially through the socialization with the veterans the recruits were subjected to “informal indoctrination” which included becoming familiar with the traditions, myths, and legends of the USMC.¹⁰ Combined with the training, this socialization gave additional meaning to the “always faithful” mantra, as much as to the nation and flag. The recruits were formed to be always faithful to the USMC and their fellow “comrades-in-arms”. “[T]o make a Marine was to create a quasi-religious *faith* in the Corps as a military organization and brotherhood”, Schroeder described the process the recruits went through.¹¹ Mary A. Renda has termed, the creation of a U.S. Marine, “indoctrination”, the process in which an individual or group is taught to uncritically accept a set of beliefs or practices.¹² Whether the recruit was made a Marine or indoctrinated, the effect was the same. The recruit was to assume the identity of a “U.S. Marine” above everything else. This identity brought him together with the other Marines in a community of something other than just fellow soldiers or “comrades-in-arms”. “It was not patriotism alone that bound together and motivated these men. It was a *faith* in

⁶ Lewis, 2007, p. 26.

⁷ Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupations and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. 69 and Smith et al., 1937, p. 457-458, reprints a plan for the evacuation of the dependents of the Marines in relation to the withdrawal of the U.S. officers serving in the GN in by January 2nd 1933.

⁸ Renda, 2001, p. 75-77 and Schroeder, 1993, p. 381-382.

⁹ Schroeder, 1993, p. 381.

¹⁰ Renda, 2001, p. 76-77.

¹¹ Schroeder, 1993, p. 381. Italics in original.

¹² Renda, 2001, p. 74-80.

themselves that and in one another in a way that is unexplainable and unfathomable to non-Marines.”¹³

Colonial infantry

In the decades after 1898 the Marine Corps, despite an almost threefold increase between 1899 and the late 1920's, was stretched very thin in terms of manpower resources because it had to assume new duties.¹⁴ The Marines assumed a new role as the most important instrument of the politicians, to enforce the Roosevelt Corollary and to export progressive reform to “underdeveloped nations.”¹⁵ The Marine Corps still had to perform their traditional duty as military police onboard U.S. Navy ships and on naval bases. In the late 1920's two thirds of the Marine Corps' manpower was assigned either to ship duty or abroad, and the strain on its personnel resources became extremely heavy.¹⁶ As a result the Marine Corps was not able to fill the quotas, it had available in U.S. Army and U.S. Navy schools, for formal midcareer training of its officer corps. This lack of officer training probably set the USMC's development in technical and managerial skills back, compared to the other branches of the U.S. armed forces who emphasized such training.¹⁷ Hence the duty as “colonial infantry”, and the unconventional battlefield the Marines were facing, required more improvisation and new tactics. The resulted pragmatism may have contributed to continued anti-intellectualism in the USMC.¹⁸

The USMC had a particular “whiteness” to it in the post-1898 decades as well. The implications of whiteness will require an examination of the concept of race at the time. The interwar era was profoundly racist. Scientific racism was common and eugenics sought to compensate for the danger of poor “heredity” by legislation and progressive policies.¹⁹ However, race was defined in a different manner than what has been usual in later, especially after World War II, and it was not as easily identifiable. Race in the interwar era had,

¹³ Bill D. Ross quoted in Schroeder, 1993, p. 381

¹⁴ A. Millett, 1991, p. 174; the threefold increase between 1899 and the late 1920's is based on numbers from A. Millett, 1991, p. 150 and 261. In 1899 the Corps strength was increased to 6273, (211 officers and 6062 enlisted). In the late 1920's A. Millett states that the Corps total manpower was 18000.

¹⁵ A. Millett, 1991, p. 148 and 164.

¹⁶ A. Millett, 1991, p. 261.

¹⁷ A. Millett, 1991, p. 174.

¹⁸ A. Millett, 1991, p. 164 and 174; the term “Colonial Infantry” is from A. Millett, 1991, and refers to the period from 1898 to the withdrawal of the Marine detachment from Shanghai in 1941. However, the end of the period of “colonial” duty was with the withdrawal of the Marines from Haiti in 1934, see A. Millett, 1991, p. 261.

¹⁹ Thomas C. Leonard, “Retrospectives: Eugenics in the Progressive Era”. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*. 19 (no. 4, 2005), 207-224, p. 207-8.

according to Thomas C. Leonard, three different uses. The first referred to humankind as a species, *Homo Sapiens Sapiens*. The second “was used in something like its modern sense.”²⁰ The third, and more widely used, was as ethnicity or nationality. This was particularly used when distinguishing among Europeans.²¹ As one progressive eugenicist explained the differences between European races, or nationalities, in the following way: “[People from] southern Italy, Hungary, Austria, and Russia [are] beaten men from beaten races [, from the] foul and stagnant pool of population in Europe.”²² These definitions of race alone did not exhaust the possible racial hierarchical categorizations of human beings. The progressives included categories such as gender, social background, insanity, and criminal tendencies, and all were frequently explained racially.²³

The USMC was the only service not to draft or enlist African-Americans in World War I.²⁴ The “racial” selection in the USMC was not confined to exclude African-Americans from enlistment. The definition similar to nationality or ethnicity carried weight in the USMC. During the economic downturn following the 1907 financial crisis potential recruits for the USMC were in abundance. The Major General Commandant (MGC) George F. Elliot told a Chicago recruiter that “it is not desired to enlist Poles in the Marine Corps as long as Americans are available.”²⁵ It should be noted that the USMC seldom lacked recruits, and thus could be very selective of who they enlisted. In addition to being popular with potential recruits, the Marine Corps had higher reenlistment rates than the other branches of the U.S. armed forces, and as many as 35% reenlisted.²⁶ This could be related to “adventurous” service combined with a higher probability of getting in the “fight”. Additionally the post-1898 era interventions and occupations were, at least in part, justified with something similar to missionary motives. Even though it was not directly associated with the spreading of Protestant Christianity, it “smacked of religious conviction” and its “gospel” was “the

²⁰ T.C. Leonard, 2005, p. 208; Leonard does not offer any further explanation of what race in “its modern sense” includes, but one can assume that this refers to non-chosen and unchangeable physical qualities, such as skin color and/or gender.

²¹ T. C. Leonard, 2005, p. 208.

²² Francis Amasa Walker cited in T.C. Leonard, 2005, p. 211

²³ Howard Winant, “Race and Race Theory”, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26 (2000), 169-185, p. 176; eugenics’ association with fascism was the main cause of the “retreat of scientific racism”. E. Barkan cited in Winant, 177.

²⁴ David W. Southern, *The Progressive Era and Race: Reaction and Reform 1900-1917* (Whelling: Harlan Davidson, 2005) p. 187; African-Americans in the U.S. Army at this time were segregated and discriminated against, in the U.S. Navy they were restricted to duty as mess attendants.

²⁵ A. Millett, 1991, p. 175.

²⁶ A. Millett, 1991, p. 175.

advantages of its own [U.S.] civilization.”²⁷ Thus, considering that the Marines Corps was the military cutting edge of U.S. intervention, it would not be unreasonable to assume that some of the Marines had such motives for enlisting or accepting commission.²⁸

The Natives

The Marines as the most active instrument of the interventionist policies of the State and Navy Departments were brought many of these policies to life. In the process they created the “native” Nicaraguan. How did the Marines serving in Nicaragua from 1927-1933 view Nicaraguan and Nicaragua? What does this view of the Nicaraguans tell us about the Marines?

The people and their politics

A veteran of many of the occupations the USMC was involved in wrote from Nicaragua to one he considered his equal, most likely a former comrade-in-arms:²⁹ “I wish you could see this country and stay here long enough to make a study of things as they are. The country itself is delightful and it has tremendous possibilities in agriculture and mining.” This Marine believed that Nicaragua had the resources to become a successful and prosperous country. He continued: “Many of the people here are as fine as one would wish to meet anywhere [...] They[sic] really good people [...] appreciate the American assistance and are hoping for the day when Nicaragua can stand on its own feet.” Only the “really good” ones appreciated and were grateful for the “assistance” the Americans provided Nicaragua. The “really good” agreed with this Marine, and the American mission, that Nicaragua was not ready for self-government. The American Mission was in the mind of this Marine, to take on the function of a father like figure in relation to his children. The goal was to enable Nicaragua to help themselves towards self-government.

²⁷ A. Millett, 1991, p. 147-148; A. Millett mentions economic entrepreneurs, politicians, newspaper and magazine writers, engineers, diplomats, and pure adventurers as the main proponents of such cultural imperialism as is entailed in the spreading of U.S. civilization; Renda, 2001, p. 12, mentions congressmen, businessmen, bureaucrats, diplomats, journalists, artists, activists, anthropologists, and missionaries, in a similar manner as A. Millett.

²⁸ A. Millett, 1991, p. 148.

²⁹ [unknown] to R. D. Webb, “[untitled letter]”, 22021931, USNA/RG127/E198/Box2/Lt. F. G. Roach, File Correspondance- 1931; The point that he writes home to someone he considers his equal is taken from the fact that the letter is headed “Dear brother:” and the final greeting in the letter is “Sincerely and fraternally”; the Marine argument that he was a veteran is based on that he wrote “I am enjoying the warm weather again. I cannot say that the cold weather is to my liking any more, as I have apparently spent too many years in the tropics.”

On the other hand, not all Nicaraguans were “really good”. The Marine saw “quite a percentage of them [the Nicaraguans] who are rather vicious and are of a communistic turn of mind. There is naturally a strong anti-American feeling among the bolshevik[*sic*] element and they do not help the country in getting back to a peaceful basis.”³⁰ This statement should be understood in the context of the contemporary U.S. and what the U.S. press was writing. On December 31 1930 eight Marines had been killed in an ambush, while repairing a telephone wire, which naturally caused harsh criticism in the U.S. Perhaps as a result of this the U.S. made some alterations to its policy in Nicaragua and made a definite plan for withdrawal after the 1932 elections.³¹

The Marine explained why Nicaraguans at that given time could not govern themselves: “Being of a mixture latin[*sic*] and Indian blood, they are rather tumultuous, and they seem to enjoy revolutions and civil disorders in much the same spirit as we take football and baseball.”³² If the Nicaraguans had not found the political “revolutions” and “disorder” so enjoyable, the Nicaraguans would manage pretty well. He considered this enjoyment to be the Nicaraguans favored leisure activity, almost as a Nicaraguan national pastime. The racial element and the idea of cultural superiority are evident here, as this Marine contributed the political instability the Nicaraguans “Latin and Indian blood”. However, one can sense that the Marine was of the opinion that the Nicaraguans one day might be able to govern themselves. This ability had to be acquired with American help; they had to be given the missing cultural tools to manage this, they had to “North-Americanize”. Statements similar to these occur abound throughout the sources I have read. The definition of what a “really good” Nicaraguan amounted to was very similar in another report: “[Vicente] Gomez is a good Nicaraguan and intensely pro-American.”³³

³⁰ [unsigned letter] to R. D. Webb, “[untitled letter]”, 22021931, USNA/RG127/E198/Box 2/Lt. F. G. Roach, File Correspondance- 1931

³¹ Macaulay, 1998, p. 183-185; see FRUS 1931, vol. V, p. 841-844 for the withdrawal plan.

³² [unsigned letter] to R. D. Webb, “[untitled letter]”, 22021931, USNA/RG127/E198/Box 2/Lt. F. G. Roach, File Correspondance- 1931

³³ Cited in Schroeder, 1993, p. 395

Victor F. Bleasdale, the GN intelligence officer, wrote to the Major General Commandant (MGC) John A. Lejeune and explained the problems they had getting reliable information in connection with the presidential elections of 1928:³⁴

We receive the same rumors of revolutionary plots etc. Some of them are probably true but it is very difficult to get accurate information on the leaders concerned. That is, it is difficult to pick the truth out of the mass of lies that comes to my desk. A people the majority of whom have spent their lives in an atmosphere of dishonesty, deception, espionage, and general crookedness are a little difficult to cope with.³⁵

Bleasdale was unable to see himself or his own culture objectively. Consequently he had problems comprehending Nicaraguan culture. He did not consider that in order to understand Nicaraguan culture he had to transcend his own culture. In an earlier report to Lejeune, Bleasdale explained what kind of country the Marines were in:

In this country an honest man is a rarity and plotting, double-crossing, and counter-espionage is encountered on every hand. A GN-2 [Intelligence section] Officer must be on the alert at all times to guard against cleverly laid traps. Traps which are planned by minds so schooled in crookedness that it is almost impossible to detect them.³⁶

Again Bleasdale's judgment of the Nicaraguan culture was harsh. It was one of "dishonesty, deception, espionage, and general crookedness" and had "minds so schooled in crookedness." He described the Nicaraguans and their relationship to truth almost as that of school children and that the Marines had to take on the role of teachers, trying to correct the false teachings of the past.

It is difficult to understand how a human being can be opposed to peace, law, and order, but such individuals are our chief source of opposition. Of course, if as a people, the Nicaraguans had any sense of law, order, honesty, and common ordinary decency, there would be no occasion for the United States

³⁴ Neill Macaulay, 1998, p. 126; Bleasdale was the USMC officer who established the intelligence section of the GN in October 1927.

³⁵ Bleasdale to Major General Commandant Lejeune, "[untitled letter]", 01071928, USNA/RG127/E43(A)/Box 28/GN-2; Correspondence of Intelligence Section. 9 Mar-1 Aug 28; John A. Lejeune was Major General Commandant 1920-1929.

³⁶ Bleasdale to Lejeune, "[untitled letter]", 01061928, USNA/RG127/E43(A)/Box28/GN. GN-2; Correspondence of Intelligence Section. 9 Mar – 1 Aug 28.

to lend its assistance to them to straighten out the pathetic mess they have made of their efforts to navigate the complicated machinery of modern civilization.³⁷

Even though Bleasdale continued to criticize the Nicaraguans' relationship to the truth, he recognized that it was not always an easy task to "navigate the *complicated* machinery of modern civilization." However, Nicaraguans' attempts to "navigate" had put them in an even worse position, a "pathetic mess." The fact that people were opposed to "law and order" was difficult for Bleasdale to understand. This "law and order" was naturally Bleasdale's and his fellow Marines' perception of the concept, not any Nicaraguan version of law and order which we may assume also existed. However, Bleasdale had a pragmatic view of civilization, as he likened it to complicated machinery which the United States had to teach "them" to navigate.

Bleasdale praised the work done by the Marines and the GN. The result was that "Nicaragua is going to have that 'free, fair, and impartial election'."³⁸ They were coming closer to accomplishing the task of giving Nicaragua its democratically elected government. When the elections were approaching Bleasdale expressed doubt whether this task was within the realm of Nicaraguan reality. His prediction of the upcoming elections and how he perceived the inner workings of the Nicaraguan political system, could lead us to believe that he did not believe the upcoming election would be the "free, fair, and impartial election" the Marines Corps were in Nicaragua to supervise.

[Emiliano] Chamorro has a big following which will go Conservative on his bidding and I think that his following includes many that, without Chamorro, would go Liberal. [José] Moncada [...] is very popular among the masses at large, the majority of whom are Liberal, and if his sympathizers are not influenced by Conservative coercion, propaganda, or money, he should win according to the "dopesters".³⁹

Bleasdale doubted which democratic potential the upcoming presidential elections actually could have. The "masses" followed their leaders and did what they were told to do, and not

³⁷ Bleasdale to Lejeune, "[untitled letter]", 01081928, USNA/RG127/E43(A)/Box 28/GN. GN-2; Correspondence of Intelligence Section. 9 Mar – 1 Aug 28.

³⁸ Bleasdale to Lejeune, "[untitled letter]", 01071928, 127/43(A)/28/GN. GN-2; Correspondence of Intelligence Section. 9 Mar – 1 Aug 28.

³⁹ Bleasdale to Lejeune, "[untitled letter]", 01081928, 127/43(A)/28/GN. GN-2; Correspondence of Intelligence Section. 9 Mar – 1 Aug 28.

what they meant was the better choice. Bleasdale seems to have believed that there was a lack of democratic potential in the Nicaraguan people, they were not lead by principles. The possibility that the “dopesters” were some of the above mentioned “minds [...] schooled in crookedness” which had laid a trap *impossible* to detect, did not strike Bleasdale’s mind. One might even conclude that if the dopesters’ information conformed to his perception of the situation, there was no reason to doubt it. One might even interpret this as a sign that Bleasdale favored the Liberal candidate Moncada, as he did not show any signs of doubt in regards to the “masses at large[‘s]” motives for voting Liberal.

“This is a sorry country and a sorry people [...] and when it becomes a better land, it will be because of the United States and your [MGC Lejeune’s] Marines.”⁴⁰ Bleasdale’s judgment of Nicaragua and Nicaraguans was quite bleak. He did not leave them much hope without the help of “the United States and your [Lejeune’s] Marines.” This implies that Bleasdale felt that the purpose of the GN and U.S. policy was good, and that he genuinely wanted to help Nicaragua become “a better land.” In an earlier report Bleasdale when he wrote about the struggles he had had in adjusting to the culture: “When things annoy me I console myself by realizing that we are here to better them and upon looking back to one year ago, I know we have done much to contribute toward the peace and happiness of the Nicaraguan people and the world in general.”⁴¹ Lejeune’s Marines were a force of good, and in Bleasdale’s mind were accomplishing the task of bettering “them”. The GN was in the process of giving the Nicaraguan people happiness and peace. The goal was to better them; give them the discipline and maybe even the same cultural tools as the unnamed Marine above was hinting at.

The second Brigade intelligence officer, H. Schmidt, had a similar view of the lack of reliable information to be gained from the Nicaraguans. “Without fear of exaggeration 99% of the information received from native sources is either too old for immediate use, is unreliable or is false.”⁴² The reason for this was that Sandino had “succeeded in impressing the natives with the idea that he [...] is the only force bwtween[sic] them and complete subjugation by our forces.” However, Schmidt suggested to all of the USMC personnel in Nicaragua that to

⁴⁰ Bleasdale to Lejeune, “[untitled letter]”, 01081928, USNA/RG127/E43(A)/Box 28/GN. GN-2; Correspondence of Intelligence Section. 9 Mar – 1 Aug 28.

⁴¹ Bleasdale to Lejeune, “[untitled letter]”, 01061928, USNA/RG127/E43(A)/Box 28/GN. GN-2; Correspondence of Intelligence Section. 9 Mar – 1 Aug 28.

⁴² H. Schmidt to all officers USMC 2nd brigade, “INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION MEMORANDUM FOR ALL OFFICERS AND UNITS”, 11051928, USNA/RG127/E195/Box1/Intelligence 202-280.

“overcome this fallacy[...][t]he half-educated native must be correctly informed as to our mission [and] with true conditions.”⁴³ Schmidt did not believe that the “half-educated”, or perhaps in a non-official wrapping ignorant, Nicaraguans lacked the “honesty and common ordinary decency”, such as Bleasdale maintained. According to Schmidt the Nicaraguans’ ignorance of the Marines’ “mission and true conditions” was what led them to give “unreliable” information. And as an attest to and an attempt to overcome the USMC’s lack of proficiency in Spanish, for every patrol it “would be desirable [...] to have at least one Guardia accompany each patrol.”⁴⁴ Another officer wrote that to aid the “correct information” about the USMC/GN mission and true condition, that the “[c]areful treatment of the natives by the marines is slowly guiding this [anti-USMC/GN] feeling to ‘pro marine’.”⁴⁵

Hygiene and morals

Lieutenant Commander B. S. Davies, the regimental surgeon with the 5th regiment, explained the high number of sexually transmitted diseases among the USMC personnel in Nicaragua by generalizing the Nicaraguans accordingly: “[Given] the mentality, morality, sanitary standards of the Natives[,] and when the number and opportunity[sic] for exposure is considered the rate is not excessive.”⁴⁶ According to Davis, the Nicaraguans did not have the discipline to restrain themselves from entering into sexual relations with the Marines. The high number of sexually transmitted diseases among the Marines had one cause, Nicaraguan morality. The high levels of sexually transmitted diseases were in no way the result of any misdoings by the Marines, as the Nicaraguan government on the encouragement of U.S. officials had instituted a system of weekly check-ups and licenses for the Nicaraguan prostitutes. Despite the fact that the system had been implemented, some of the Nicaraguans still carried sexually transmitted diseases, which the Marines had become victim to.⁴⁷ Davies continued in his recommendations that the tour of duty for the U.S. officers in Nicaragua should be restricted to eighteen months, and did not confine the threats to the Marines’ physical health.

⁴³ H. Schmidt to all officers USMC 2nd brigade, “INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION MEMORANDUM FOR ALL OFFICERS AND UNITS”, 11051928, USNA/RG127/E195/Box1/Intelligence 202-280.

⁴⁴ H. Schmidt to all officers USMC 2nd brigade, “INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION MEMORANDUM FOR ALL OFFICERS AND UNITS”, 11051928, USNA/RG127/E195/Box1/Intelligence 202-280.

⁴⁵ USNA/RG127/E204/Box 1/20 Intelligence Reports, EDA Eastern Area.

⁴⁶ “Sanitary report of the Campo de Marte, Fifth Regiment, Managua, Nicaragua, 1 January, 1929,” p. 4, USNA/RG127/E204/Box7/File No. 560 “Sanitation” 2 of 2.

⁴⁷ “Sanitary report of the Campo de Marte, Fifth Regiment, Managua, Nicaragua, 1 January, 1929,” p. 4, USNA/RG127/E204/Box7/File No. 560 “Sanitation” 2 of 2.

Considering the strenuous and monotonous duty that the majority of the men are required to perform, the large number of malarial, dysentery and venereal infections, the limited opportunity of association with white people and scarcity of healthy amusements it is considered that no man should do more than 18 months in this country.⁴⁸

The diseases the Marines were exposed to from both the physical environment and the population constituted a major health risk. So did the lack of association with white people, as the flip side of such lack of contact was the association with the non-white Nicaraguans. The Nicaraguans hygienic standards were noted in the GN regulations, “some natives have a superstition against taking daily baths,” and that a system was to be set up in order to get all of the enlisted Nicaraguans to do this as a daily routine.⁴⁹

The Marines Occupy Nicaragua

The goals and motives of the politicians in Washington DC have been outlined earlier. We shall now examine what motivated the Marines in Nicaragua and what they interpreted some of the tasks they were assigned to do. The unnamed Marine was paternalistically and racially motivated in his continued struggle to give the Nicaraguans the tools of self-government, Bleasdale and Schmidt approaches were more similar to a teacher’s. Either way the Marines were the ones which had to give something to better the Nicaraguans and their culture; nothing could be learned the other way.

Establishment of law and order

As for the politicians, the Marines serving in Nicaragua saw the establishment of law and order as the most important task. Bleasdale could not understand why the Nicaraguans did not value law and order which he and his fellow Marines were there to teach “them”. However, not all of the Marines in the GN and USMC had the same concept of law and order and did not enforce all of the laws in the same manner.

In the earlier part of the occupation reports were common that the presence the USMC/GN in a department, city, town, or village was enough to establish law and order. From Puerto

⁴⁸ “Sanitary report of the Campo de Marte, Fifth Regiment, Managua, Nicaragua, 1 January, 1929,” p. 6, USNA/RG127/E204/Box7/File No. 560 “Sanitation” 2 of 2.

⁴⁹ “REPUBLIC OF NICARAGUA REGULATIONS For The GUARDIA NACIONAL de NICARAGUA 1928”, “Chapter 17-26 PERSONAL HYGIENE”, “17 BATHING”, p. 35, USNA/RG127/E43(A)/Box33/GN. Regulations for the Guardia Nacional. 1928.

Cabezas on the Mosquito Coast the USMC Area Intelligence officer reported that “the fact of [the patrols] presence is doubtless responsible for the present good conditions.”⁵⁰ The favorable conditions were linked solely to “the fact” that USMC/GN was patrolling. The Intelligence officer explained how he thought the improving economic condition was a result of the USMC/GN law and order and he divined “signs of still more improvement.”⁵¹

The individual GN officer was given considerable room to exercise their “best judgement[sic]” in selecting which laws to enforce.

Some [...] laws while apparently not revoked or superseded are really obsolete[, while] [o]thers are excellent and though in many places are not being enforced could be enforced with benefit. [...] In some places a rather large number of [these]excellent laws has[sic] fallen into disuse following the Revolution [the civil war of 1926-27] or for some other reasons, and the people have become accustomed too[sic] laxity in enforcement.⁵²

Even though most of this “judgment” was to be exercised on the local level by the individual D.C., they were also instructed not to enforce all of these “excellent laws” at once. This may have been caused by a desire not to be seen as too harsh and perhaps even avoid similar problems they experienced during the occupations of Haiti and Santo Domingo. Hallvard Notaker has noted that the reports of friction between the Marines serving in the Haitian constabulary, *Gendarmerie Haiti*, amounted to several hundred.⁵³

To enforce all of these laws at once might place a hardship upon many persons. It is desirable that those laws which clearly should be enforced be taken up one at a time for enforcement and that the people be warned in advance, that such and such law will be enforced from such and such date. [...] In each case the cooperation and sanction of the Alcade and Local authorities should be sought prior to enforcement.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Area Intelligence Officer to [unknown], “INTELLIGENCE REPORT, POLITICAL AND GENERAL”, 12081928, USNA/RG127/E204/Box1/20 Intelligence Reports, EDA Eastern Area.

⁵¹ Area Intelligence Officer to [unknown], “INTELLIGENCE REPORT, POLITICAL AND GENERAL”, 12081928, USNA/RG127/E204/Box1/20 Intelligence Reports, EDA Eastern Area.

⁵² “General Order 48-1928”, 04031928, USNA/RG127/E38(A)/Box24/N-45.536 Nicaragua – Guardia Nacional - General orders (1928).

⁵³ Hallvard Notaker, *U.S. Marines – Fremskrittets misjonærer: Kulturmøter under USAs okkupasjon av Haiti 1915-1934* (Unpublished Cand.Philol. thesis: University of Oslo, 2002), p. 73.

⁵⁴ “General Order 48-1928”, 04031928, USNA/RG127/E38(A)/Box24/N-45.536 Nicaragua – Guardia Nacional - General orders (1928).

This General Order awarded considerable room for the officers to exercise their own “best judgment”. Thus practice varied greatly. Many clarifications and adjustments to the laws were issued over time, and the GN officers’ enforcement varied greatly. However, there are comparatively few reports of friction between the GN officials and local officials, which might suggest that the Marines in Nicaragua were cooperating better with the local officials.⁵⁵

Tolerant approaches to law enforcement were attempted. The Division Commander in the department Chontales, Graves B. Erskine, came in a conflict with the Commanding Officer (CO) of the USMC attachment stationed in Juigalpa, Chontales. In relation to a festival in Juigalpa DC Erskine had been approached by “leading citizens” to discuss certain of the customs and traditions of an annual festival that probably would not be in accordance with the law.

In particular it was agreed that the Guardia patrol would not arrest men in fist fights unless they were interfering with other persons or inflicting undue punishment on each other, and that in cases of fights of evenly matched cowboys they would be allowed to fight until satisfied or the police Guardia decided that the fight was unfair for one opponent, [and] in accordance with principles of the Guardia Nacional as is covered by a General Order.⁵⁶

Erskine in this incident tried to accommodate local customs and traditions when maintaining law and order. He cooperated with the local officials in assuming the enforcement of laws which had come into disuse and he was approachable not to enforce certain laws when the situation called for it. This was probably an attempt to avoid giving the GN negative publicity and to build up some trust between the GN and the population of Juigalpa. As we saw above, this point was stressed by the JDGN when the GN was reestablished and was one of the main goals for the GN. In this incident the CO of the USMC detachment which was stationed in Juigalpa did not agree with DC Erskine. The USMC Martin interfered in the resulting fights:

⁵⁵ In the MREs covering the final three years of the occupation for nine of the eleven GN departments, there are two reports of serious friction between the GN and civil officials; one case from Jinotega where a local judge was “confined by Guardia for continued misconduct.” DC Jinotega to JDGN, “MRE Jinotega September 1932”, 10101932, USNA/RG127/E202/12.0 and one case from Bluefields where a GN officer had interfered “with the civil courts”. The GN officer was removed and “cordial relations have been reestablished.” AC East to JDGN, “MRE Eastern Area July 1931”, 11081931, USNA/RG127/E202/14.0 3 of 4.

⁵⁶ DC Chontales to JDGN, “Interference in civil police matters of Juigalpa by Captain C. H. Martin, U.S. Marine Corps”, 16041928, USNA/RG127/E204/Box2/ 50 Chontales.

[...] in fact my actions in this matter were to help bring about order in a situation which appeared to be reaching proportions which would quickly go beyond immediate control and would probably cause injury to some in again maintaining order, having had previous experience with drunken Latin people in a free for all fight.⁵⁷

The conflict between the GN and USMC in Juigalpa does not appear to be an isolated incident because January 1, 1929, orders were issued for the GN and the USMC detachments in Nicaragua. "In all towns, villages and other places where the Guardia Nacional has taken over the duties of the civil police they will not be interfered with in their police functions by Marines attached to this [2nd] Brigade."⁵⁸

The situation between the GN and USMC detachment in Chontales above would be contradictory to Schroeder's argument that the Marines were "culturally arrogant to the extreme."⁵⁹ In the department of León in June and July 1931, there had been several smaller robberies and the reaction from the DC León, James W. Webb, could also be pointing in a another direction than what Schroeder argues about cultural arrogance.

There have been no occurrences [...], during the months of June and July, which could be called bandit raids. There have been numerous robberies committed during June and July, these have been committed by individuals and small groups and have consisted in most cases of in the theft of cattle and milk. These individuals and small groups are people out of work and the robberies are committed for the purpose of securing food.[...] As long as the present economic conditions continues these robberies can be expected to continue.⁶⁰

Webb proposed a socio-economic explanation with regard to the problem of robberies in the department of León. He was not satisfied with the rather superficial explanations of Nicaraguan behavior.

The Marines did not only see their role as police and military in Nicaragua as a job in itself. They saw the value of their attempt to establish law and order as a means to a greater end. The

⁵⁷ CO Martin to CO 5th reg. , "Fist fighting during fiesta at Juigalpa, Nicaragua, 16 August, 1928", 17081928, E204/Box 2/ 50 Chontales.

⁵⁸ "General Order 2-1929", 01011929, ", 21051927, USNA/RG127/E38(A)/Box24/ N-47.537 Nicaragua – Guardia Nacional – General Orders (1929) Continued; the GN General Order quotes Brigade Order 1.

⁵⁹ Schroeder, 1998, p. 221.

⁶⁰ DC León to JDGN, "Re: Alleged bandit raids in Leon during June and July", 09071931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box1/4.0 1 of 3.

impartial, or non-partisan, enforcement of the law gave the Nicaraguan people a better sense of security as well. As the CO of the USMC detachment in the department of León reported in May 1928: “Business men in Leon report that business in Leon has increased materially since the arrival of Marines.”⁶¹ The CO here gave the arrival of the Marines as the main reason for the “material” improvement in business he had seen. In another report from the same department the CO quoted a Nicaraguan business leader who praised the work of the USMC/GN. How its arrival had improved the business conditions in “the towns and adjacent department where the U.S. and National Guard [GN] troops are stationed, business houses have not suffered losses.” In the parts of the country where that was not the case “report of pillage have been frequent.”⁶²

Improving the economy

The GN was giving impetus to the improvement of the economy through establishment of law and order. The fact that as many as 5000 Marines were stationed in Nicaragua was positive as well.⁶³ “On the rivers in the northern sector the boatmen and Indians are making more money than previously, due to our supply shipments [and] it can be said that the economic conditions in this area are good, and steadily improving.”⁶⁴ Other officers took on the responsibility to suggest actual improvements of the economy. They gave physical protection and stimulated the economy through their presence. During the world wide depression the AC East, Lloyd L. Leech, gave special attention to the economic condition on the Mosquito Coast. “The economic conditions in this Area do not improve, and if the banana market does not show more activity in the future the principal industry on the East Coast may cease to exist.”⁶⁵ Leech’s concerns were not exclusively for the Mosquito Coast’s or Nicaraguan economy. He was equally concerned for the U.S. companies who had invested on the Mosquito Coast.

The miniature cities, such as EL GALLO and PUNTA GORDA, which a few years ago were thriving population and fruit centers, that required thousands of dollars for the weekly payroll, and even maintained local railways, are now practically deserted. The dozens of modern-built residences are

⁶¹ Hakala to [unknown], “Bn-3 Report No. 5”, 05051928, USNA/RG127/E196/Box1/ File intelligence.

⁶² W.C. Hall to [unknown], “Bn-3 report No. 3”, 21041928, USNA/RG127/E196/Box1/ File intelligence.

⁶³ The number of about 5000 Marines is taken from Gobat, 2005, p. 216.

⁶⁴ Area Intelligence Officer to [unknown], “INTELLIGENCE REPORT, GENERAL”, 22071928, USNA/RG127/E204/Box1/20 Intelligence Reports, EDA Eastern Area.

⁶⁵ AC East to JDGN, “MRE East December 1931”, 08011932, USNA/RG127/E202/ Box2/14.0 3 of 4.

vacant and carry an official inventory value on the books of the United Fruit Company , of only \$1.00 per house.⁶⁶

The depression was not the only reason for the poor economic conditions in the area, according to Leech. The U.S. investments on the Mosquito Coast had depreciated and further depreciation had to be avoided.

The local manager of the United Fruit Company frankly states that extensive holdings of lands in other countries are more than sufficient to supply the banana in demand in the markets, and that they will cease to operate in Nicaragua if further taxes, imposts, and duties are levied. The recent tax on commercial papers , drafts and checks conveying money from Nicaragua to the United States, is, seemingly, a grossly exorbitant[sic] tax. It affects foreign industries operating in Nicaragua to a greivous[sic] degree, and is particularly obnoxious to the local fruit industry.⁶⁷

Competition from other countries was to blame, but most important was the new “grossly exorbitant” taxes the Nicaraguan government had imposed on the “fruit industry”. Leech’s concern was untypical for the GN officers. However, the Mosquito Coast was the area with the most U.S. investments and economic activity, and the only place where protection of U.S. investments could come across as something other than simple physical protection from theft and robberies. Namely to protect investments from unfavorable legislation making the investments less profitable.

Establishing and leading the GN

It is the intentions of the Chief Director of the National Guardia[sic] to immediately start the reorganization of the Guardia upon new basis that have been adopted to convert this body in[to] a most efficient one, so that every citizen of Nicaragua may be proud of it and all its personnel glad and satisfied to serve it and have a most high *Espirit[sic] de Corps*.⁶⁸

This was the mission statement of the first JDGN of the reestablished GN, Robert Y. Rhea, in the very first “General Order”.⁶⁹ Rhea’s mission statement to instill in the Nicaraguan people

⁶⁶ AC East to JDGN, “MRE East December 1931”, 08011932, USNA/RG127/E202/ Box2/14.0 3 of 4.

⁶⁷ AC East to JDGN, “MRE East December 1931”, 08011932, USNA/RG127/E202/Box2/14.0 3 of 4.

⁶⁸ “General Order 1-1927”, 21051927, USNA/RG127/E38(A)/Box24/ N-47.535 Nicaragua – Guardia Nacional – General Orders (1927); italics added.

⁶⁹ “reestablished” will be used because this was not the first time a Nicaraguan constabulary had been established under the name of *Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua*; for more on the first attempt to establish a Nicaraguan constabulary see: R. Millett, 1977, “II Major Carter’s Constabulary”, p. 41-60.

a sense of pride because of the GN was bold.⁷⁰ The GN had to win “the hearts and minds” of the occupied population. This process according to Edelman has to be done in a manner similar to a trade. The occupying force has to give the population something they did not previously have, in return the occupied is more likely to tolerate the presence of the occupier.⁷¹

Several measures were implemented to accomplish this. One of the most blatant ones was giving the Nicaraguan people medical services.

- (1). Medical officers of the Guardia Nacional will render medical assistance to civilians when civilian medical assistance is not available. Such medical assistance will be given as a charity and in the name of the Guardia Nacional.
- (2). In outlying districts where no civilian medical aid at all is available medical officers of the Guardia Nacional will treat need civilian cases on request. Such treatment will be given as charity and in the name of the Guardia Nacional.
- (3). It is not desired that medical officers of the Guardia Nacional compete with civilian practitioners[sic] so that when such civilian practitioners are available, medical officers of the Guardia should not render medical attention. Where civilian medical attention is not available a feeling of humanity demands that the Guardia assist.⁷²

The individual medical officer had considerable room to determine whether to give medical assistance or not. According to Smith et al. availability was not confined to actual existence of civilian medical assistance in the district. Despite the GN regulations state that medical assistance was not to compete with civilian practitioners, “it was the policy [of the GN] to give medical attention to certain civilians, [in] cases [where the civilian was unable to] obtain medical aid for financial reasons.[...] This created much good feeling, favorable to both the Guardia and American officers.”⁷³

Other measures were also put into effect that could aid the relationship between the GN and the Nicaraguan population. In Patate the CO of the GN station suggested that the GN should assist in the reopening of a local school. “[I]f this school is reopened the credit will go to the

⁷⁰ The attempts to instill in the GN enlisted a “most high *Esprit de Corps*” will be discussed in chapter 5.

⁷¹ Edelstein, 2004, p. 58-59.

⁷² “REPUBLIC OF NICARAGUA REGULATIONS For The GUARDIA NACIONAL de NICARAGUA 1928”, “Chapter 17-17 MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO CIVILIANS”, p. 19, USNA/RG127/E43(A)/Box33/ GN. Regulations for the Guardia Nacional. 1928.

⁷³ Smith et al., 1937, p. 89.

Guardia and the reaction will be all in our favor.”⁷⁴ In June 1931 “the people [...] throughout the Department” of Estelí was unable to procure food, from lack of money, and the U.S. GN officers were “daily giving small amounts [of money] to the poor to buy food.”⁷⁵ The Marine Corps Aviation unit, stationed in Nicaragua to support the GN and Marines, flew in food to prevent starvation.⁷⁶ The Marines were trying to establish the GN as a force for good and thus give Nicaraguans a reason to be proud of it.

Conclusion

The Marines that occupied Nicaragua was part of a cohesive group of young white men. The Marine Corps’ new function as the “cutting edge” of the interventionist policies of the U.S. had shaped their world view.⁷⁷ The Marines considered Nicaraguans untruthful, crooked, and too immature to assume the tasks of self-government. The Nicaraguans had to “North-Americanize”, and they needed guidance to become independent. This was above all the Marines task to accomplish, through the GN. The lessons the Marines had learnt from the other post-1898 occupations may have influenced more of a cooperative policy. Less friction occurred between the Marines and Nicaraguans. The Marines perceived the occupation of Nicaragua along the lines of what Edelstein has termed “comprehensive.”⁷⁸ They were not only there to make Nicaragua less of a security risk to the U.S. They genuinely wanted to improve, help, and assist “a sorry country and a sorry people” to reap the benefits of modern civilization.

⁷⁴ CO Patate to AC North, “School at Savannas”, 30031931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box16/92.0

⁷⁵ DC Estelí to JDGN, “MRE Estelí June 1931”, 01071931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box2/11.0 Monthly Reports of Events.

⁷⁶ DC Estelí to JDGN, “MRE Estelí June 1931”, 01071931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box2/11.0 Monthly Reports of Events and Gobat, 2005, p. 217.

⁷⁷ A. Millett, 1991, p. 164.

⁷⁸ Edelstein, 2004, p. 54.

4. The Encounter with Caudillismo

The commander of the Special Service Squadron Rear Admiral Julian L. Latimer publically defended the U.S. intervention and subsequent occupation by presenting his opinion about what the Nicaraguan “masses” thought about it.

As to the masses, I think ,[...] that 75 per cent of the people in Nicaragua would welcome the United States there to take over the whole Government, so that they could go on with their work, so that when they put a dollar away they would have some hope of keeping it. Among the industrious classes, they want to be left alone. Those are the people suffering from revolutions.¹

The Nicaraguan politicians were described in a very different way: “There is a class of politicians out of all proportion to the population of the country, who live by politics, who live by office. Those who are out of office do not live very well, and those who are in live on the fat of the land.”²

When the Marines came to Nicaragua they perceived themselves as a neutral force to protect foreign life and property in Nicaragua during the civil war of 1926-27, following the policy of interposition. The civil war was essentially an intra-elite conflict between the Liberals and Conservatives. The U.S. policy in this conflict was to reestablish constitutional rule and “assist in the supervision of the coming elections [...] in order that the question of which party should control the government thereafter should be decided by peaceful methods.”³ There had not to this point in Nicaraguan history been a peaceful change of government, as the party in power had always retained its power after elections. The governing party and its members were able to use the state machinery to campaign and “manipulate” the election results to their party’s advantage.⁴ The only way the opposition party had been able to get into

¹ United States Senate, *Use of the United States Navy in Nicaragua: Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Relations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office: 1928), p. 35. Hereafter cited as *Senate Hearings*

² Ibid.

³ Henry L. Stimson, 1991, p. 38. Stimson’s use of “assist” has to be understood in the context and why he wrote this book in the first place. The book was as much a defense of the policy he was involved in making, as anything else. “Assist” meant to the Americans “to lead” or “have responsibility for the supervision of the coming elections.”

⁴ Kamman, 1968, p. 143.

government was through an armed "revolution."⁵ After the election of 1924 and Chamorro's *coup d'état* the United States had come to the conclusion that "dollar diplomacy," at least in Nicaragua, had failed to produce the desired results. The intervention in the name of promoting Nicaraguan democracy represented a change in the U.S. policy.⁶ Instead of political stability through dollar diplomacy's "economic stability" the United States now attempted a different approach. Political stability was to come as a result of democratically elected legitimate governments.

U.S. policymakers in Washington, DC, the most significant obstacle to this in Nicaragua was the political culture which persisted, *caudillismo*.⁷ But the political objectives of the politicians in Washington DC seldom if ever got communicated to the Marines sent to execute them.⁸ Many of Marines only saw the consequences of what they did, or what they believed to be the most immediate effect of their actions, as the policy itself. One of them, Lieutenant T. J. Kilcourse, when he was part of the joint USMC/GN offensive towards Sandino's headquarters, *El Chipote*, wrote in his diary what he considered to be the policy of his government in Nicaragua. "[We are here to] keep in power a man who, when he got himself in a mess, and about to be thrown out of office by a revolution – called for and got the help of the Marines to keep him in power."⁹

Kilcourse was very critical of how they were trying to implement the U.S. policy. The criticism being that he had been told that they were in Nicaragua to change the political system and improve Nicaragua, but that they were actually preserving *status quo*. His understanding of the U.S. goals in Nicaragua may not have been not very representative, yet it illustrates how the Marines did not get fully informed as to why they found themselves in Nicaragua. This left the Marines with a considerable leeway to interpret and give meaning to their own everyday experiences. Kilcourse added; "the public of the United States whose

⁵ Manipulate in did not only imply election day irregularities. The party in government used a wide repertoire of methods to dictate the election results; revolution does not imply a revolutionary change in the politics of the government. The policies of the government seldom went through large changes if a "revolution" was successful. There were of course some changes, but primarily a revolution in Nicaraguan simply meant a change of the people in government.

⁶ Gobat, 2005, p. 205-06, has argued that this constituted a complete break in the U.S. "imperial" policy altogether.

⁷ Gobat, 2005, p. 205.

⁸ R. Millett, 1977, p. 71.

⁹ "Personal Diary of USMC Lieutenant T.J. Kilcourse", 31121927, <http://www.sandinorebellion.com/PCDocs/1928a/PC280105-Kilcourse.html> (accessed: 13032010). Hereafter cited as *Kilcourse Diary*.

opinion would demand our immediate withdrawal were they to realize the true facts.”¹⁰

Kilcourse reiterated his criticism of the policymakers in Washington DC, and felt that he and his fellow Marines’ actions in Nicaragua were immoral.

In this chapter we will examine the Marines’ encounter with the Nicaraguan elite and local politicians. First we will see what caudillismo amounted to and some of the different ways the Marines tried to handle the individual caudillos. Then we will examine how the Marines tried to overcome caudillismo in municipal elections. Second the GN’s attempts at overcoming caudillismo. Finally we will examine of the GN’s relationship to other law enforcement agencies in Nicaragua.

Marine Strategies

The Marines occupying Nicaragua utilized several strategies in the encounter with Nicaraguan officials. In order to see these strategies in a context a brief description what the Nicaraguan political culture of caudillismo amounted to will be necessary prior to examining the Marines’ strategies.

Nicaraguan caudillismo

The Nicaraguan political system was described by the Chairman of the 1932 U.S. Electoral Mission, Admiral Clark Woodward, as very similar to European feudalism.¹¹ William Beezley argues that caudillismo was a type of authoritarian rule typical of Spanish America. It was the new sovereign states’ and their political elites’ response to the power vacuum left by the Spanish colonial administration in Latin America. Due to the poor communications (the lack of extensive river systems, good road networks) and the settlement patterns of the elite in widely dispersed urban centers, strong regionalism developed. The regionalism had led to elite conflicts in the years before and immediately after independence.¹²

Nicaraguan caudillismo functioned through informal networks of *caudillos*, or “political-military strongmen.”¹³ The power and position of the caudillo relied heavily on the individual’s ability to position himself in these networks on the local, regional, or national

¹⁰ *Kilcourse Diary*, 31121927.

¹¹ Woodward cited in: Gobat, 2005, p. 207.

¹² William Beezley, p. 345-348; for examples of these conflicts see Woodward, 1999, p. 61-148 *passim*.

¹³ Schroeder, 2004.

levels. The caudillo networks' power came at the expense of the central state, and thus the continuance of caudillismo also meant a continued weak central state.¹⁴ All of the successful "revolutions" in the period was a testament to the Nicaraguan central state's weakness.¹⁵ Even though the central state was weak it did not imply that it came close to being non-existent. Its functions were reduced to instruments of the national caudillo network that managed to control it. The caudillo network that managed to gain control over the state got access to all political offices and other paid government employment.¹⁶ The state thus became the most sought after instrument by the two large competing national networks, which were almost always equal to the two earlier mentioned Liberal and Conservative parties.¹⁷ The control of the state apparatus gave the "in" party an exceptional opportunity to use all of its government appointees to determine election results through electoral fraud and other coercive measures.¹⁸ The networks were most active publically during elections when government positions and political appointment would become available.¹⁹ Even though the political appointment usually was determined by party affiliation, the individual caudillo could exercise some opportunism and receive appointment from both Conservative and Liberal administrations.²⁰

In the more remote regions of the country more political power was in the hands of caudillos, but not necessarily the local ones. An example of this was in the Northern Highlands of Nicaragua, where the caudillo power prior to the U.S. occupation was in the hands of the Granada-based Chamorro-fraction of the Conservative Party.²¹

The military was smaller in Nicaragua than elsewhere in Latin America, but was nonetheless a very important factor in Nicaraguan politics.²² The other two most important factors in

¹⁴ Schroeder, 1996, p. 387.

¹⁵ From 1893-1912 there were four successful "revolutions"; the relative stability 1912-1925 has been explained by the presence of the USMC legation guard.

¹⁶ Schroeder, 1996, p. 390; the exception to this was the *Alcade*, similar to a U.S. Mayor, will be discussed below.

¹⁷ Schroeder, 1996, p. 392.

¹⁸ Schroeder, 2000, p. 30-1.

¹⁹ Gobat, 2005, p. 208

²⁰ Schroeder, 1996, p. 397, argues by means of the example of Abraham Gutiérrez had first been an appointee of Liberal José Madriz during his brief administration in 1910, then he held several offices during the Conservative administrations from 1910-1928, and was appointed by Liberal José Moncada in 1928 to be *Administrador de Rentas*.

²¹ Schroeder, 2000, p. 38.

²² Both José Santos Zelaya, Torres Rivas, 1993, p. 19, and Emiliano Chamorro, Macaulay, 1967, p. 24, have been termed a military caudillo. One could even add José María Moncada, as he was Solorzano's minister of war and lead the Liberals in the 1926-27 civil war.

caudillismo were the Catholic Church and ability to attract the large landholders to one's cause.²³ On the local and regional levels small merchants, professionals, and labor leaders could be important as well.²⁴ Ethnically the caudillos were Spanish Creole and elite Mestizos who had succeeded in trade or other areas which gave them a position within caudillismo. On the local level some of the Indigenous chiefs held important positions, as they could mobilize thousands of votes for their patrons.

The power and standing of each caudillo in the different caudillo networks depended on the caudillo's inherited status and accumulated wealth of his ancestors. However, other factors also entered into the caudillo's way of mobilizing power, and were equally if not more important. Intangible qualities such as leadership, diplomatic ability, ability to mobilize the masses, and political efficiency were crucial in the individual caudillo's ability to succeed politically.²⁵ This did not mean that family name did not carry any importance. Intermarriage could consolidate two families' power, and an aspiring caudillo could by marrying into one of the more prominent families manage to gain access to a more important position in the caudillo networks.²⁶

The Marines trying to understand caudillismo

The Marines had difficulties understanding caudillismo and they definitely came to Nicaragua with some prejudices about what they met, what it was, and how it functioned. "He is a typical Latin-American obstructionist," Louis E. Fagan, the CO of the USMC detachment in the department of Chontales, described the Chief of Police in Boaco in May 1927. Fagan continued: "he and his men are tools in the hands of politicians [and] [t]he idea of giving every one a square deal is too much for their precious interest."²⁷ Fagan clearly saw himself as a protector or liberator of the poor and unfortunate, he was very critical of the "politicians", and recommended that the Chief of Police be removed. This anti-elitism was very common in the GN, and Smith et al. did not leave this uncommented and offered us an insight into how

²³ Beezley, 1969, p. 349.

²⁴ Schroeder, 1998, p. 210-211.

²⁵ Schroeder, 1996, p. 391.

²⁶ An example of "marrying" into power was Anastacio Somoza García who by marrying Juan B. Sacasa's niece managed to get access to and rise to prominence in the Liberal national caudillo network.

²⁷ CO 43rd company to CO 2nd Brigade, "Removal of Chief of Police Boaco", 30051927, USNA/RG127/E225/Box2/43rd Co R of E 1927; Chontales was the one last departments to be transferred from the USMC to the GN as the northern areas of Nicaragua was given priority due to the presence of Sandino's DANSN; the Division of Chontales was established 27071928.

the Marines viewed the power structures in Nicaraguan society and how they had come to the present situation.

The wealth of the country is concentrated in the hands of the *aristocraticos*, who constitute a relatively small proportion of the population.[...] The [...] poverty of the major portion of the population and their lack of education has reduced the poorer classes to a condition of economic slavery.[...] There is a great gap between the *clase social* and the three industrial classes of Nicaragua[...] in the relative financial position, [...] educational opportunities[...] and [...] political influence.[...] The political control of the country lies[sic] in the hands of the *aristocraticos*. The *artesanos* have some influence [but] [the two lowest classes] [t]he *melganos* and the *mozos* are ready to vote as their landlord dictates.²⁸

The anti-elitism in this passage is evident and the responsibility for the misfortunes of the Nicaraguan people was in the hands of the *clase social*. They took advantage of the lowest classes, the *melganos* and *mozos*, who “[were] easily bribed by a few drinks [of alcohol] or a meal.”²⁹

An example of “obstructionist” behavior was in March 1929 when two of the local officials in the main Pacific port of Corinto had caused the GN some trouble. The Director of Police Ernesto Perreira and the *Comandante de Armas* Joaquin Rivas, had tried to control the GN in Corinto, the main port on the Pacific Coast.³⁰ During the incident the CO of the GN in Corinto, Cadet Stevens, was shot through the arm and the DC of Chinandega Grover C. Darnell “urgently requested that every effort be made to have both Mr. Pereira and Mr. Rivas removed from their office.”³¹ Similar statement to Darnall’s, requesting the removal of local officials, occur in the sources, when there was friction reported between the USMC/GN and local officials. Darnall and Stevens’ situation above was solved. According to Burke Davis, or maybe Lewis “Chesty” Puller himself, the situation was not definitely over until “Chesty” Puller arrived in Corinto. He had scared the officials, by showing off his ability with a machine gun in the harbor, not to obstruct the GN anymore.³² However, the officials in

²⁸ Smith et al., 1937, p. 52-3. *Italics mine*. *Clase social* is to Smith et al. equal to the *aristocraticos* which to them were the two upper classes of the society. *Artisanos* were the upper of the three industrial classes and were composed of urban artisans and shopkeepers. *Melganos* and *Mozos* were the two lowest and most exploited classes.

²⁹ Smith et al., 1937, p. 53.

³⁰ *Comandante de Armas* was similar to a reserve officer in charge of the government weapons in his portion of the country.

³¹ DC Chinandega to JDGN, “Report on conditions and trouble in Corinto, 2nd and 3rd March 1929” , 04031929, USNA/RG127/E197/Box2/250.10 President of the Republic #1 1 of 2.

³² Davis, 1962, p. 57-8.

Corinto did not cease to cause trouble for the GN. In June 1931 the GN lost its barracks and prison in Corinto:

[T]he government authorized the destruction of the [...] building formerly used [...] by the [GN] as a *cuartel* and city prison. The salvaged material from same was allocated the Alcade of Corinto for the purpose of rebuilding the market place.[...] The direct result of this action[...] was to deprive the Corinto Guardia of a *cuartel* and prison.³³

The GN in Corinto was given temporary barracks, but the facilities did not measure up to the ones they had earlier. The prisoners had to lay around “in irons” in the improvised prison “which [was] very demoralizing.” But the welfare of the prisoners was not JDGN Matthews' primary concern. He saw the situation as a “calculated [action] to reflect great discredit on the Guardia and the Government.”³⁴ Whether or not this was an actual attempt by the Alcade of Corinto to rebuild the market place and do what he believed was for the best of his town did not strike the mind of JDGN Matthews, nor that this was a sign of more confidence in the GN's ability to protect public and private property.³⁵ He only saw the action as an “obstructionist” attempt to “discredit the Guardia,” The GN seemed to be what Matthews considered the most important government activity of them all. “In practice, the [GN] is the constitution of this country,” a GN officer was reported stating to an arrested representative of the *Fellowship of Reconciliation*.³⁶ This statement has been interpreted to imply that the U.S. officers of the GN granted themselves extralegal rights in Nicaragua.³⁷ This may very well be the case, however, it could also be a statement pertaining to the support, or rather the lack thereof, the GN officers felt they received from the Nicaraguan officials in “constitutional” rule.

Smith et al. portrayed the problems they had in their meeting with caudillismo and the local government officials: “The actual coöperation with civil officials of the Government of

³³ JDGN to President Moncada, “[untitled letter]”, 26061931, USNA/RG127/E197/Box2/250.10 Presidente 1931; My *Italics* : Cuartel is Spanish for barracks or quarters, it may also refer to headquarters. The term is used fairly regularly among the the Marines serving with the GN. To a lesser extent *carcel*, Spanish for prison, was used. Both Spanish and English terms are used interchangeably, even in the same document, throughout the material written during the occupation.

³⁴ JDGN to President Moncada, “[untitled letter]”, 26061931, USNA/RG127/E197/Box2/250.10 Presidente 1931

³⁵ An example of the GN giving the people more confidence in the governments increased ability to provide security DC Chinandega to JDGN, “MRE Chinandega December 1931”, 08011932, USNA/RG127/E202/Box3/17.0; see chapter 5, “building trust in the government”.

³⁶ [an unnamed GN officer] cited in Buell, *Reconstruction in Nicaragua*, p 332 footnote 12.

³⁷ Grossman, 1996, p. 260.

Nicaragua constituted one of the most difficult problems which confronted the Guardia Nacional.”³⁸ The “difficult problems” arose from the “constant attempt, on the part of the local officials to reduce the Guardia Nacional to the same position of subordination to themselves as was occupied by the old national army.”³⁹ This “old national army” was in the remote regions of Nicaragua actually more similar to small personal armies sponsored by the local caudillos and mobilized usually to settle problems “at the behest of” their sponsors.⁴⁰

However, not all of the Marines serving in the GN saw the local officials and the political structure of caudillismo as what inhibited real progress in Nicaragua. Caudillismo offered openings to “North-Americanize” Nicaraguan society, by retaining corrupt Nicaraguans in office. Herbert S. Keimling was the first U.S. Marine and GN officer to assume command of the Managua Police Company.⁴¹ Keimling came up with some “ingenious solutions hardly imagined by the statesmen and generals” who drew up the GN-agreement, R. Millett wrote about Keimling’s ways of handling the officials of Managua.⁴² Keimling wrote to one of his successors as Chief of Police in Managua and co-author of Smith et al., Hamilton M. H. Fleming. “The first few days was[sic] spent getting in touch with the old police force and director how they did it,” and Keimling concluded that “it was run mostly by graft.”⁴³ He then went on about the methods he used when he managed to handle the Nicaraguan official.

I first got to work on the Police Director to see if I could get something on him officially or socially. Well I got the goods on him [the police director] that he was padding the pay roll [with employees that existed only on paper and] pocketing the money[and that he] would settle most of the cases out of [the] courts and pocket [the money] which should have been turned in as fines.⁴⁴

Keimling continued to explain how he handled the police director’s corrupt ways and how he used this information as leverage when negotiating with the police director. The GN police force had very limited office space at their disposal.

³⁸ Smith et al., 1937, p. 53.

³⁹ Smith et al., 1937, p. 53.

⁴⁰ Schroeder, 1996, p. 394.

⁴¹ The police force in Managua was the only GN force to remain strictly a police force throughout the occupation.

⁴² Millett, 1977, p. 72.

⁴³ Keimling to Fleming, “[untitled letter]”, 11031933, USNA/RG127/E198/Box2/Misc 1932.

⁴⁴ Keimling to Fleming, “[untitled letter]”, 11031933, USNA/RG127/E198/Box2/Misc 1932.

I called [the police director] in[to] my office and we had a nice talk. The result was that he wrote a letter to the Minister of Police stating that he had discharged certain people (the ones on paper). [However] I did not make an official report of the matter but talked it over with the Jefe Director.⁴⁵

Keimling even managed to gain considerable control over the court now headed by the former Police Director.

I looked the police reports over each morning and made notations on it[*sic*] for the police judges[*sic*] information. The [former] Director of Police [had in the mean time] be[en] made the police judge by decree. [...] I handeled[*sic*] all the Police matters except giving them a sentence. I practically did that [as well,] as my notations were the amount to fine each individual.⁴⁶

Having obtained the “cooperation” of the Police Judge, Keimling attempted to establish a similar relationship with the Alcade of Managua.⁴⁷

[However], [h]e was never in his office when we wanted him as he held his office hours at the club[s] or cantinas [of Managua]. I took up the matter [...] with the Minister of Gobernacion[*sic*] and was politely told that as long as the janitor was in the building [of] the Alcade it was functioning in the name of the law.[...] [T]he Mayor [...] wanted the police assistance in getting the automobiles to pay for operating them on the streets and highways. I invited the Mayor out to dinner [...] told him that it was impossible to know who had paid and who had not. So the matter [went] pro and con until I designed for him license plates which we were using in the [United S]tates. It worked and between many bottles of beer we worked out the system.⁴⁸

Keimling used the Police director's, and later judge's, inclination towards corruption to assert even more power over Managuan society. The corruption being that Keimling gave the police director an opportunity to make a personal gain, or rather avoid a personal loss. By looking the other way for certain infractions of the law by the official, he traded his silence for a part of the judge's power to enable more efficiency in the police force and the enforcement of the law. In that sense he became an actor in the local Managua caudillo network. This trade was according to Keimling sanctioned at the highest level of the GN, as he had “talked the matter over with the JDGN.” In the matter with the Alcade, Keimling invited the Alcade to the

⁴⁵ Keimling to Fleming, “[untitled letter]”, 11031933, USNA/RG127/E198/Box2/Misc 1932.

⁴⁶ Keimling to Fleming, “[untitled letter]”, 11031933, USNA/RG127/E198/Box2/Misc 1932.

⁴⁷ The position of Alcade was similar to a U.S. Mayor

⁴⁸ Keimling to Fleming, “[untitled letter]”, 11031933, USNA/RG127/E198/Box2/Misc 1932; the minister of police was the later mentioned Minister de Gobernacion, who in addition to police affairs was responsible for the judiciary, interior, and government.

Alcade's "office", one of Managua's cantinas. Keimling's "cooperation strategy" was based solely on his personal qualities and ability to position himself, much like a caudillo, in the local caudillo network of Managua. Keimling was not content with the influence his cooperation with the Managua officials had given him. In order to enable even greater influence he established a line of communication with President Díaz. "[Keimling] used the lady next door to the police station[*sic*] (Mrs Irene Vd de Pasos) to present [the GN's] case to the President (Díaz) whenever [the GN] had to lock up some prominent conservative.[...] She was one of [Keimling's] agents."⁴⁹

The "removal strategy" was even utilized in cases where there was no friction between the local officials and the GN, and the only objective of the removal was to maintain law and order. In Santo Domingo a conflict between the miners and the mine management had developed over some time.⁵⁰ The Alcade, a local merchant Ramon Vijil, had sided with the miners, "as their [the merchants'] business requirements necessitate their listening to the miners' grievances and maintaining friendly relations with them."⁵¹ Despite being unable to "find any evidence of any overt acts on his [the Alcade's] part", DC Chontales, Fredrick M. Howard recommended Vijil's "removal as alcade[*sic*] and his removal from Santo Domingo, together with the appointment of an alcade[*sic*] who will better cooperate with the mine officials would tend to clear up the situation."⁵²

Overcoming Caudillismo

Several attempts were made by the Marines serving in Nicaragua to create an atmosphere of friendship between the two traditional feuding parties. Smith et al. wrote:

The practice of the American officers on duty in the Guardia Nacional of inviting the members of both parties to all social functions without regard to their political affiliations has done something toward bringing about a better understanding between the adherents of the two parties. The maintenance of the Guardia Nacional as a strictly non-partisan organization has further contributed to the allaying of some of the partisan bitterness.⁵³

⁴⁹ Keimling to Fleming, "[untitled letter]", 11031933, USNA/RG127/E198/Box2/Misc 1932.

⁵⁰ Santo Domingo is located in the eastern part of the department of Chontales.

⁵¹ DC Chontales to JDGN, "Investigation, Jabali Mines.", 04071931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box2/9.0.

⁵² DC Chontales to JDGN, "Investigation, Jabali Mines.", 04071931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box2/9.0.

⁵³ Smith et al., 1937, p. 51.

The GN included the Nicaraguans in other leisure activities as well. The GN regulations stated that “games such as football, baseball, and track athletics, should be encouraged.”⁵⁴ The DC in Estelí, Roscoe Arnett, had “strute[d out on the golf course] with his officers and the ladies and gentlemen townfolks for this favorite activity.” He further noted that:

[T]he ladies have taken a great interest in the game [, even] more so then[sic] the gentlemen.[...] [I]t is the intention of the [DC] to build a Croquet Field near the church.[Because] [i]t has been proven that sports of any nature amongst the civilians have broughtout[sic] a greater friendship and better understanding in our relationship.⁵⁵

Arnett used sports to bring the people together and held the clear opinion that socializing with Nicaraguans had an almost missionary function. Sports were aiding the Marines, according to Arnett, in “better understanding of [their] relationship” between the Marines and the Nicaraguans.⁵⁶

Gobat argues GN utilized social functions and leisure activities as an attempt to facilitate a better understanding between the political parties and between the Marines and Nicaraguans. In addition, he argues, that the GN was trying to dismantle caudillismo from the outside by attacking the very government institutions which were in the hands of the caudillos.⁵⁷ In the next section we will examine what attempts were made by the GN to circumvent and immobilize caudillismo.

“Supervising” municipal elections

Most of the government posts in Nicaragua during the occupation were filled by presidential appointments. The most notable exception from this was the Alcade, a position similar to a U.S. Mayor. The Alcade was elected by the male population of an incorporated municipality, in essence the larger villages and the towns. Municipal elections were important in the distribution of power and wealth, and to a similar degree as the presidential and congressional elections had been determined by the coercive capacities of the caudillo networks.⁵⁸ Different

⁵⁴ “Regulations for the Guardia Nacional. 1928.” chapter “17-26 PERSONAL HYGIENE 4. PHYSICAL EXERCISE”, USNA/RG127/E43(A)/Box33/GN.

⁵⁵ DC Esteli to JDGN, “MRE Esteli April 1931”, 04051931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box2/11.0 Monthly Reports of Events.

⁵⁶ DC Esteli to JDGN, “MRE Esteli April 1931”, 04051931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box2/11.0 Monthly Reports of Events.

⁵⁷ Gobat, 2005, p. 216.

⁵⁸ Gobat, 2005, p. 208 and Schroeder, 2000, p. 31.

from the Presidential and congressional elections, there was no separate U.S. supervisory electoral mission in these municipal elections. During the U.S. supervised national elections the GN had the supporting role of maintaining law and order. In the national elections personnel from the U.S. Army, the U.S. Navy and the Marine Corps headed all of Nicaragua's electoral boards. The GN played a very similar role in the municipal elections as they did during the larger presidential and congressional elections of 1928, 1930, and 1932. Through the maintenance of law and order, the GN prevented the most blatant coercion during the elections and prevented to a degree the manipulation of the election results. During the municipal elections held throughout Nicaragua in November 1931, there was a USMC Major Charles F. B. Price assigned to observe. Even though Price reported many irregularities and a great deal of fraud, he was unable to accomplish much because of lack of formal authority.⁵⁹

Gobat has argued that the GN presence in Nicaraguan elections represented a considerable opening. No political party or organization was persistently opposed to or critical of the GN presence in elections.⁶⁰ Hence there was little friction between the GN and political parties or groups during these elections. Prior the U.S. occupation the dominant party, or caudillo network, in a department had to a large extent controlled the outcome in municipal elections. However, there could be a hint of democratic competition in these elections, as the competing caudillos had to gain the people's support.⁶¹ The Marines noted this, if most politicians were not pleased with, they did at least not oppose the GN supervision. This appeared to be the case even though they were severely critical of the U.S. occupation of Nicaragua.⁶² This may have been the result the GN supervision representing a significant opening of the political system, as Gobat claims, or from the "establishment of law and order" and the impartial enforcement of it. Schroeder argues that most of the upper and "petty bourgeoisie" classes in Nicaragua were friendly to the GN because of the protection it offered from both the masses, mobs, and political enemies.⁶³ On occasion it was noted that some friction was present. The AC East commented on the Nicaraguans attitude towards the installation of the GN in the area, and he

⁵⁹ Munro, 1974, p. 269.

⁶⁰ Gobat, 2005, p. 208.

⁶¹ Gobat, 2005, p. 208; The elections were hardly free, but there could be a hint; in the National elections the USG would not allow a third party to enter the elections, as that could cause even more trouble for the USG to get their policy through the Nicaraguan congress as no party would have a majority. For more on the national elections see Gobat, 2005, p. 205-216 and Kamman, 1968, p. 143-168.

⁶² Gobat, 2005, p. 208.

⁶³ Schroeder, 1998, p. 233-5 and 237; Schroeder, 1998, p. 233, defines the "petty bourgeoisie" as "that [...] heterogeneous social class [...], occupying the interstices of a historically castelike class-ethnic structure, in possession of significant cultural or material capital in comparison to the laboring poor."

noted that “[t]he installation of the [GN] as the police force throughout this coast will be favorably received by all classes except the present office holders and their friends.”⁶⁴ The actual process of supervising municipal or locally administered elections is not very well documented in the sources I have used. However, in the MREs statements of little or no trouble occur, such as:

During the primary elections of Alcade the past month special requests were made by leading citizens of Chinandega and other town[s] for Guardias [GN personnel] to be on duty at the different polling places, stating that they desired Guardias because they were impartial, and after voting was over letters were received from officials in charge of the elections commending the Guardia for their conduct and performance of duty.⁶⁵

Other reports describe the political situation in connection with municipal elections and locally administered primary elections in the political parties.⁶⁶

Contrary to what Gobat argues, the U.S. officers of the GN did not necessarily consider the municipal elections as free and fair, nor did they feel they ensured the free participation of all eligible voters. In the municipal elections in the Department of Granada in November 1931 the DC Stewart B. O’Neill had considerable problems when trying to keep the elections free and fair. Granada was the Conservative Party’s stronghold in Nicaragua. O’Neill noted that even though the elections had been held without any serious trouble, the elections could not be classified as free. All of the election boards in Granada had been headed exclusively by Conservative party members.⁶⁷ This was in sharp contrast to the practice during the U.S. supervised national elections. Where there had been one conservative and one liberal member of each board, in addition to a U.S. chairman.⁶⁸ O’Neill held the opinion that these one-sided election boards had not been as impartial as the U.S. led ones and that the partial election boards had caused “a great many irregularities in the election [and i]n numerous cases the law

⁶⁴ AC East to JDGN, “INTELLIGENCE REPORT OF INCIDENTS”, 01041928, USNA/RG127/E197/Box1/184.5 Area of the East.

⁶⁵ DC Chinandega to JDGN, “MRE Chinandega August 1931”, 31081931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box3/17.0; for other examples similar comments see: AC east to JDGN, “MRE East November 1930”, 03121930, USNA/RG127/E202/Box2/14.0 3 of 4 and DC Chontales to JDGN, “MRE Chontales October 1930”, 10111930, USNA/RG127/E202/Box3/21.0

⁶⁶ DC Rivas to JDGN, “MRE Rivas July 1932”, 07081932, USNA/RG127/E202/Box3/20.0;

⁶⁷ DC Granada-Masaya to JDGN, “Municipal elections in Granada Nov. 1 1931”, 03111931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box16/84.0 Electoral Mission 1 of 2.

⁶⁸ Gobat, 2005, p. 209.

was entirely disregarded.”⁶⁹ O’Neill struggled securing the election records and complained to the JDGN about the trouble of securing the records and the irregularities during the election.⁷⁰

However, “the elections were very orderly” because of the GN and the “most commendable” service rendered during the process.⁷¹ The GN had made provisions to avoid that it was compromised by existing patron-client relations. In Granada “most of the enlisted Guardias on duty in Granada were from the [Department of] Chontales.”⁷² This was the policy of the GN when possible, making sure that the mission of maintaining law and order would not be compromised by “NICARAGUAN politics.”⁷³ As an extra precaution to avoid this the *Guardia Municipal*, a locally recruited police force funded the municipality they served in under the command of the GN, was not allowed to be stationed at the polling places during these elections.⁷⁴ The Guardia Municipal was to have no duties in connection to the transportation of the ballot boxes either, but rather served as a reserve and street police during the elections in Granada.⁷⁵ O’Neill concluded that “in order to hold a free and impartial election in this Department [Granada],[...] it is necessary that the Presidents of the Directorios [Electoral boards] be Americans with absolute authority.”⁷⁶ O’Neill was of the opinion that if there had been a U.S. citizen with “absolute authority” the elections would have been less fraudulent. However, this was not O’Neill’s main problem with the elections. To O’Neill the worst problem was not the election results itself, but the fact that neither he

⁶⁹ DC Granada-Masaya to JDGN, “Municipal elections in Granada Nov. 1 1931”, 03111931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box16/84.0 Electoral Mission 1 of 2.

⁷⁰ DC Granada-Masaya to JDGN, “Escrutinio of Municipal Elections in the City of Granada”, 09111931, DC Granada-Masaya to JDGN, “Election records city of Granada, (1 Nov. 1931)”, 13111931, DC Granada-Masaya O’Neill to JDGN, “Municipal Elections, City of Granada, 1 Nov. 1931”, 16111931, DC Granada-Masaya O’Neill to JDGN, “Collection of election records Dept of Granada-Masaya”, 20111931, all in USNA/RG127/E202/Box16/84.0 Electoral Mission 1 of 2.

⁷¹ DC Granada-Masaya to JDGN, “Municipal elections in Granada Nov. 1 1931”, 03111931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box16/84.0 Electoral Mission 1 of 2.

⁷² DC Granada-Masaya to JDGN, “Municipal elections in Granada Nov. 1 1931”, 03111931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box16/84.0 Electoral Mission 1 of 2.

⁷³ unsigned and undated [Cites Second Brigade Intelligence Report 18071929 as source], “NICARAGUA – ARMY”, USNA/RG127/E38(A)/Box23/N-47.5 Nicaragua – Guardia Nacional, Distribution of.

⁷⁴ JDGN to National Board of Elections, “[untitled letter]”, 23101931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box16/84.0 Electoral Mission 1 of 2

⁷⁵ JDGN to National Board of Elections, “[untitled letter]”, 23101931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box16/84.0 Electoral Mission 1 of 2 and DC Granada-Masaya to JDGN, “Municipal elections in Granada Nov. 1 1931”, 03111931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box16/84.0 Electoral Mission 1 of 2.

⁷⁶ DC Granada-Masaya to JDGN, “Municipal elections in Granada Nov. 1 1931”, 03111931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box16/84.0 Electoral Mission 1 of 2.

nor another U.S. citizen did not had the authority to enforce the law to its fullest extent. And any failure to do so would possibly tarnish the reputation of the GN.

During municipal elections in the adjacent department of Masaya. The District Commander Richard S. Reed did not experience the same trouble, or alternatively did not voice the same concerns as DC O'Neill did in Granada. Even though the election results in Masaya were even more lopsided than in Granada.⁷⁷ In Masaya the vote in eight of the ten Alcade elections went all liberal due to the fact that the elections had been uncontested by the Conservative party, or any other party.⁷⁸ This was just recorded by District Commander Reed. No reflections were offered as to why few or no seats were contested, it was merely stated as a fact. In the departmental capital of Masaya a workers or labor party, *Obreros*, was the only one to challenge the Liberals. This would support Gobat's claim that the GN contributed to an opening of the elections, the eight uncontested elections would support the GN did not contribute to a significant opening.⁷⁹

Reports similar to Reed's, giving us an impression that the GN officers were more or less indifferent to the election results and the health of local democracy, are more common in the sources than O'Neill's. Unless serious trouble occurred, nothing was reported other than that law and order had been maintained because of the service of the GN. DC Estelí, John C. McQueen displayed an even more indifferent attitude when he reported that "[t]he political situation is without interest. The elections for Local Officials has[sic] been canceled."⁸⁰ This might imply that the political situation to McQueen, from a GN perspective, was without interest. He offered no explanation as to why the municipal elections in Estelí had been

⁷⁷ Masaya was a separate department in Nicaragua, but due to its small size and Granada's small size and limited exposure to Sandino's forces and other "organized" banditry they were combined on 08011929 to one department. The same was the case with the department of Managua and Carazo on 20031929; according to DC Granada-Masaya to JDGN, "Municipal elections in Granada Nov. 1 1931", 03111931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box16/84.0 Electoral Mission 1 of 2 the Conservatives received 54% of the vote to Liberals 46% in Granada.

⁷⁸ District Commander Masaya to DC Granada-Masaya, "Municipal elections in, Department of Masaya, report of", 02111931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box16/84.0 Electoral Mission 1 of 2.

⁷⁹ District Commander Masaya to DC Granada-Masaya, "Municipal elections in, Department of Masaya, report of", 02111931 202/16/84.0 Electoral Mission 1 of 2; *Obreros* is the Spanish common term for workers/artisans; an opening and widening of the Nicaraguan political spectrum would not a tall order, as usually the only party to participate fully was the one with the president; the 10th and final Alcade election in the department of Masaya, in the town of Tisma, was won by a vote of 98 Conservative to 47 Liberal, or Conservative majority 68% to the Liberals 32%.

⁸⁰ DC Estelí to JDGN via AC North, "MRE Esteli August 1931", 03091931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box2/11.0 Monthly Reports of Events.

cancelled. This indifference could imply that he did not care about the municipal elections and local democracy. McQueen might even have felt relieved that the elections had been cancelled, because that would not require him and his men to deal with the problems that might arise.

Ralph H. Forsyth, the DC in Rivas, took a considerable interest in the candidates for Alcade in the town of Rivas. He gave a description of the different candidates, both for Alcade *Propetario* and *Suplente*, and gave his opinion of each ticket.⁸¹ The “Liberal Ticket” was not preferred because “the alcade [sic] suplente would be a brick layer who has no sense of responsibility and whose knowledge of government is nil.” The “Conservative Ticket” was weak and “the pasts of members of the ticket [were] shady. [Because] prior administrations when through irregularities the town [had been] thrown into heavy debt.” His support went to the “Mixed Ticket” of Joe Muños and Augusto Lacayo as it “was composed of leading citizens of both parties for the purpose of defeating the straight liberal and conservative tickets.[...] This ticket seems to have a very good chance of winning and should it win [...] the town would benefit by it.”⁸² Contrary to District Commander Reed, Forsyth gave much consideration to the election for Alcade in Rivas. His opinion of who should be elected was influenced by what he meant would be more beneficial to the town. However, Forsyth did not care to report how the campaigning went or who won the election in the following MREs, which could lead us to believe that he was not as concerned with the result as his MRE of August 1931 could imply.⁸³

The Marines serving in the GN had several different ways of handling the municipal elections during the occupation. Most seemed to hold the same indifferent attitude as District Commander Reed and DC McQueen. They were satisfied if they prevented the most blatant coercion, maintained law and order, and the reputation of the GN was not in any danger of being tarnished. This final point was the case in Granada which could imply that O’Neill was not that different from the other Marines in his relation to the municipal elections.

⁸¹ The Alcade *Propetario* and *Suplente* were respectively the Alcade and his assistant/deputy.

⁸² DC Rivas to JDGN, “MRE Rivas August 1931”, 04091931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box3/20.0; Augusto Lacayo was the Propetario candidate for the Conservative party.

⁸³ In the MREs September-November 1931 Forsyth reported under the header “Political situation” respectively that there was “No activity”, “Nothing to report”, and “Quiet.” All of these reports are located in USNA/RG127/E202/Box3/20.0

Increasing government efficiency

The U.S. officers of the GN had to establish several different government departments and institutions, not just deal with strictly police tasks. Among them was the administration of all prisons in Nicaragua, which included was the National Penitentiary in Managua. R. Millett states that this prison had “served as a place of confinement and little else. Criminals, political prisoners and the insane were locked up together under miserable conditions.”⁸⁴ The GN wanted to “[i]mprove each prisoner mentally, morally and physically so that when [the prisoner] is discharged he will be a better citizen.”⁸⁵ In order to accomplish these training programs were set up for the prisoners to learn a trade and “for the betterment of the prisoners themselves.”⁸⁶ The training produced merchandise and was part of the GN policy to “make the penitentiary self-supporting.”⁸⁷ Beginning June 1929 the penitentiary weaving shop produced all of the GN uniforms for 40% less than they had been able to procure the uniforms from outside sources.⁸⁸ Whether or not the National Penitentiary only confined the prisoners prior to the GN take over, which the last Marine *Comandante* gave R. Millett the impression, is not within the scope of this thesis. However, if that was the Marines’ impression of the penitentiary, they did at least in their own minds improve the living conditions and increase the efficiency of the penitentiary, both economically and relative to the rehabilitation of the prisoners.⁸⁹ Efficiency was not the only motive for the GN in the administration of the prisons. There were also other benefits. They saw a wider meaning in teaching the prisoners a trade; that the prisoners would become better citizens, and thus contribute to Nicaraguan society.

⁸⁴ R. Millett, 1977, p. 74. Millett’s conclusion was based on an interview with the last *Comandante* of the National Penitentiary in Managua James L. Dunham. The penitentiary was destroyed in the March 31, 1931 earthquake and was not rebuilt.

⁸⁵ “ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GUARDIA NACIONAL DE NICACARGUA October 1st 1928 to September 30th 1929” p. 39, USNA/RG127/E43(A)/Box33/GN Hist sect. History of the Guardia Nacional. 23Jan27 – 24 Oct 29In 1929

⁸⁶ “ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GUARDIA NACIONAL DE NICACARGUA October 1st 1928 to September 30th 1929” p. 41, USNA/RG127/E43(A)/Box33/GN Hist sect. History of the Guardia Nacional. 23Jan27 – 24 Oct 29In 1929

⁸⁷ ⁸⁷ “ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GUARDIA NACIONAL DE NICACARGUA October 1st 1928 to September 30th 1929” p. 39, USNA/RG127/E43(A)/Box33/GN Hist sect. History of the Guardia Nacional. 23Jan27 – 24 Oct 29In 1929

⁸⁸ “ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GUARDIA NACIONAL DE NICACARGUA October 1st 1928 to September 30th 1929” p. 41, USNA/RG127/E43(A)/Box33/GN Hist sect. History of the Guardia Nacional. 23Jan27 – 24 Oct 29In 1929; the trades taught in the National Penitentiary was carpentering, weaving, shoemaking, tailoring, and Hog farming.

⁸⁹ According to “ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GUARDIA NACIONAL DE NICACARGUA October 1st 1928 to September 30th 1929” USNA/RG127/E43(A)/Box33/GN Hist sect. History of the Guardia Nacional. 23Jan27 – 24 Oct 29In 1929, the prisoners’ living conditions were as good as if not better than the conditions for the enlisted GN assigned to the company in charge of the prison, who were living in tents.

Other areas of the GN's responsibilities show that they wanted to increase Nicaraguan government efficiency. The above mentioned Keimling desired to increase the government revenue from fines in Managua.

I went to the Jefe Politico and told him that I had to have forms and Police blotters and showed him by keeping an up to date record of offenses that I could get more money on fines for repeaters. [...] When I took over the fines amounted to forty dollars a month but when we took control it jumt [sic] to \$500.00 and \$600.00 per month.⁹⁰

The increased efficiency implied that the chances of being apprehended and the revenue of the government simultaneously increased. In addition, the GN also wanted to demonstrate to the Nicaraguans that they were not an expense on the Nicaraguan budget. On numerous occasions the GN officers emphasized that an increased effort would show the Nicaraguan politicians that the GN was as much a source of revenue as an expense. JDGN Matthews issued instructions of July 1 1931, in connection with loss of government revenue due to the decrease in sale of taxed liquor. Matthews saw an opportunity to increase the status of the GN.

The Government and people of Nicaragua are passing through a period of extraordinary economic depression.[...]The officers of the Guardia will readily appreciate this situation and will realize the benefits which will accure to the Guardia and the country from the substantial increase in revenues from this source. In the present [...] economic situation any direct increase in the internal revenue due to the activity of the Guardia in the suppression of contraband will be the most visible and convincing proof to the Government official and people of Nicaragua that the Guardia is dedicated to the economic welfare of the nation and disposed to earn its money.⁹¹

Matthews wanted the GN to assist in the economic recovery of Nicaragua. Equally important the JDGN wanted the Nicaraguan government to see that the GN was aspiring to be a source of revenue. A possible interpretation could be that JDGN Matthews also wanted to prove to “government officials and the people” of Nicaragua that the non-partisan character of the GN was best. Matthews was also in this period having problems convincing both U.S. and

⁹⁰ Keimling to Fleming, “[untitled letter]”, 11031933, USNA/RG127/E198/Box2/Misc 1932, the “we” Keimling was referring to were himself and his four junior officers.

⁹¹ JDGN to all officers, “CONFIDENTIALCIRCULAR LETTER TO ALL OFFICERS OF THE GUARDIA NACIONAL”, 01071931, USNA/RG127/E38(A)/Box23/ N-47.2 – Nicaragua – Guardia Nacional Circular letters & Memorandums.

Nicaraguan government officials that the non-political character was the best one.⁹² To motivate and encourage the GN to increase their efforts, Matthews added that Nicaraguan law stated that a person disclosing or “apprehending violator[s]” was entitled to “a portion of the fines collected from violators,” and that in the past “some guardias[*sic*] have gained considerable remuneration for their energies in seizing contraband[*sic*] liquor.”⁹³ The risk of this leading to abuses did not get any attention from Matthews, which could imply that the survival of the GN was more important than the rights of the Nicaraguans.

Possibly inspired by JDGN’s instructions to clamp down on illegal liquor distribution, DC Chinandega Craig recommended a method of increasing the government revenue:

The greatest source of danger in this Department is the Estero Real where gasoline launches and canoes can easily enter from the Golfo de Fonseca coming from Honduras and [El] Salvador or Mexico and bringing contraband of all kinds; the country along the Estero Real is so swampy as to preclude effective patrolling[...]. The only effective way to stop this contraband running is to have a Government launch in the Estero Real under the command of a Guardia officer which could stop and search all boats entering[...], it is believed that such a launch would be well worth the money, [...] because it would increase the revenues of the country.⁹⁴

Craig was convinced that if the Nicaraguan government funded a boat for the GN to patrol the area, it would be money well spent. Perhaps not coincidentally the method that would be utilized to increase the government revenue would also give DC Craig more control of the department.⁹⁵

Guardia Nacional: the sole military and police force

According to the GN agreement, the GN was to “be considered the sole military and police force of the Republic.”⁹⁶ There were some ambiguities in the GN agreement which caused considerable problems for the GN. The existence of other law enforcement forces which did not have to comply with the GN’s strict rules of impartiality was one of the sources of such

⁹² R. Millett, 1977, p. 127-130.

⁹³ JDGN to all officers, “CONFIDENTIALCIRCULAR LETTER TO ALL OFFICERS OF THE GUARDIA NACIONAL”, 01071931, USNA/RG127/E38(A)/Box23/ N-47.2 – Nicaragua – Guardia Nacional Circular letters & Memorandums.

⁹⁴ DC Chinandega to JDGN, “MRE Chinandega July 1931”, 05081931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box3/17.0.

⁹⁵ The Estero Real is a river which empties into the Gulf of Fonseca, between Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua.

⁹⁶ FRUS 1927, Vol. III, p. 437

problems. These rules were given by the JDGN and included that the Nicaraguans serving under Americans had to “give up all political affiliation. All clearly just acts on their [Nicaraguan officials’] part should be supported and commended.”⁹⁷

Undermining of the Nicaraguan authorities: GN vs. Guardia Hacienda

The establishment of the GN as the “sole military and police force” in Nicaragua was above all undermined by the *Guardia Hacienda*. The Guardia Hacienda was under the administration of the departmental *Administrador de Rentas*, the head tax collector in a department. However, the Guardia Hacienda occasionally was commanded and directed by the police director or the departmental Jefe Politico, whichever of them had a task for them. The Guardia Hacienda was responsible for the control of contraband, the levying of taxes, and was an important power factor in rural areas before the GN was reestablished. The Guardia Hacienda was responsible to the departmental Administrador de Rentas and was under his direct control. This may have contributed to the Guardia Hacienda being viewed by the GN as one of the more potent tools of whichever caudillo was appointed to that position. In a sense this made the Guardia Hacienda a Presidential police force, since the Administrador de Rentas was an appointee of the President.⁹⁸ The relations between the Guardia Hacienda and the GN has not received any attention in the literature, except a very superficial examination.⁹⁹

The CO of the Marines stationed in Estelí in 1928 stated about the Director of police in the same town: “[H]e sent [...] all of the Hacienda [*sic*] guard to Condega to electioneer for the conservative candidate.”¹⁰⁰ The Guardia Hacienda were also inclined to “us[e] their office for personal gain” and only to pursue personal or political foes.¹⁰¹ These ways of enforcing the law did not comply “the doctrine of the Guardia to give fair and impartial service, free from politics.”¹⁰² They were described by the earlier mentioned Viktor F. Bleasdale as even “more of a menace to peaceful communities than the outlaws they were supposed to operate

⁹⁷ JDGN to all DCs, “Civil police officials”, 16041928, USNA/RG127/E196/Box1/Operations 2 of 2.

⁹⁸ For more on the problems of maintaining the GN as the sole police and military force of Nicaragua see R. Millett, 1977, p. 89-92 and 103-124 *passim*, Kamman, 1968, p. 182-183, and Macaulay, 1998, p.136-137 and p. 144.

⁹⁹ The exceptions are R. Millett, 1977, p. 73, and Gobat, 2005, p. 218.

¹⁰⁰ CO 16th company to CO 5th regiment, 28121928 “Chief of Police Esteli”, 204/3/No. 60 “Esteli” 2 of 2 [with same title].

¹⁰¹ E.U. Hakala to Commanding General 2nd brigade, 27041928, “Bn-3 Report No. 4”, USNA/RG127/E196/Box1/File intelligence.

¹⁰² JDGN to all DCs, “Civil police officials”, 16041928, USNA/RG127/E196/Box1/Operations 2 of 2.

against.”¹⁰³ This corrupt manner of doing things was not confined to the Guardia Hacienda. The above mentioned Keimling had some difficulties in getting his Managua police force not to “lock up everybody that they had a personal grudge against or who would not turn over a little graft.”¹⁰⁴ In the Managua police force Keimling had the “undesirables weed[ed] out at the start.”¹⁰⁵ This “weeding” was not a luxury available to the GN when dealing with the Guardia Hacienda.

In April 1928 the GN was awarded the full control over all of the police authorities in Nicaragua, however, this would “not be construed to includes [*sic*] Hacienda Guards.”¹⁰⁶ Thus the Guardia Hacienda could not be forced to comply with the impartiality of the GN. To counter this exception, JDGN Beadle ordered the GN officers to make “[s]pecial efforts [...] to confiscate contraband and apprehend the persons dealing in contraband.” Beadle was not trying to conceal his motives for this instruction: “The purpose [of] this direction is to demonstrate the inefficiency of the Hacienda Guards.”¹⁰⁷ In this way Beadle was perhaps hoping that the Nicaraguan politicians would succumb to reason, and transfer Guardia Hacienda power to the GN.

Richard Millett is when he writes that the Guardia Hacienda was disbanded and that the GN assumed their responsibilities in September 1928 for the duration of the occupation.¹⁰⁸ Even though the GN probably wanted to retain as much of the power as possible, this was only a temporary arrangement “in order that the flow of alcoholic liquors could be controlled” during the 1928 presidential election campaigning.¹⁰⁹ The Guardia Hacienda assumed their prior authority in January 1929 and continued to hamper the GN in their duties.¹¹⁰ An incident between the GN and Guardia Hacienda occurred some time before April 10th in the Western Area (the departments of Chinandega and León) which led the AC West request “that orders be issued, by the proper authorities, to the Hacienda Guard, preventing them from interfering

¹⁰³ Victor F. Bleasdale cited in R. Millett, 1977, p. 73.

¹⁰⁴ Keimling to Fleming, “[untitled letter]”, 11031933, USNA/RG127/E198/Box2/Misc 1932.

¹⁰⁵ Keimling to Fleming, “[untitled letter]”, 11031933, USNA/RG127/E198/Box2/Misc 1932.

¹⁰⁶ JDGN to all DCs, “Civil police officials”, 16041928, USNA/RG127/E196/Box1/Operations 2 of 2.

¹⁰⁷ JDGN to DC Chinandega, DC Leon, DC Nueva Segovia, DC Managua, DC Jinotega, and DC Southern Bluefields, “Confiscation of contraband”, 13040928, USNA/RG127/E196/Box1/Operations 2 of 2.

¹⁰⁸ R. Millett, 1977, p. 73; Gobat, 2005, p. 218, argues similarly that the GN assumed the duties of “rural guards” and contraband controllers (*inspectors de hacienda*).

¹⁰⁹ “ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GUARDIA NACIONAL DE NICACARGUA October 1st 1928 to September 30th 1929” p. 11, USNA/RG127/E43(A)/Box33/GN Hist sect. History of the Guardia Nacional. 23Jan27 – 24 Oct 29.

¹¹⁰ “ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GUARDIA NACIONAL DE NICACARGUA October 1st 1928 to September 30th 1929” p. 11, USNA/RG127/E43(A)/Box33/GN Hist sect. History of the Guardia Nacional. 23Jan27 – 24 Oct 29.

in police cases unless called in by the proper Guardia official to assist as a serious Clash[sic] might result between the two armed forces working without cooperation.”¹¹¹ The situation that caused this recommendation from AC West Thrasher originated in Chinandega when the *Jefe Politico* had directed the Guardia Hacienda to pursue a group of robbers. DC Craige Chinandega reported that “[o]n one occasion known to the department commander this guard [the Guardia Hacienda] has been used in the pursuit of local criminals having been sent out by civil officials.[...] [T]his Hacienda Guard is [...] usurping the functions of the Guardia Nacional.”¹¹² The Guardia Hacienda had to conform with these orders “otherwise these guards [Guardia Hacienda] might be taken for bandits and fired on in the dark while interfering with the duties of the Guardia Nacional.”¹¹³ This bandit/Guardia Hacienda confusion was not confined to this one incident. On several occasions the GN complained about the Guardia Hacienda, their lack of proper uniforms, and that the Guardia Hacienda was not in accordance GN agreement.¹¹⁴

Rural police agents

In the more remote and rural areas and communities of Nicaragua, the *Juezes de Mesta* (Juez) and *Jefes de Cantón* (Juez) had the combined judicial and police functions.¹¹⁵ “[T]hese [...] two officials exercise an authority through intimidation far out of proportion to their actual duties established by law” the U.S. Department of State wrote in their official account of the relations between the U.S. and Nicaragua, 1909-1932.¹¹⁶ Neither of them had a government salary, but they were both entitled to half of whichever fines they issued.¹¹⁷ Much like the Guardia Hacienda, this had led to a reputation of being notorious for their mistreatment of the population. The GN was aware of this and also tried to restrict their activities. Gobat argues that GN’s takeover of the functions of these “much-feared rural sheriffs” was what affected rural Nicaragua the most.¹¹⁸ The Juezes were never disbanded and continued to exist

¹¹¹ AC West to JDGN, “Robbery on the farm of Señor Roberto Callejas”, 10041930, USNA/RG127/E202/Box1/4.0 3 of 3

¹¹² DC Chinandega to JDGN, “MRE Chinandega March 1930”, 06041930, USNA/RG127/E202/Box3/17.0

¹¹³ DC Chinandega to JDGN via AC west, “Robbery on the farm of Senor Roberto Callejas”, 09041930, USNA/RG127/E202/Box1/4.0 3 of 3.

¹¹⁴ FRUS III, 1929, p. 624.

¹¹⁵ Both Juez de Mesta and Jefe de Cantón will be abbreviated Juez since both in principle had the same functions, the Jefe de Cantón holding an assistant or deputy position to the Juez de Mesta.

¹¹⁶ United States Department of State, “The United States and Nicaragua: A Survey of Relations from 1909-1932, reprinted in *Henry L. Stimson’s American Policy in Nicaragua: The Lasting Legacy* (New York: Markus Wiener Publishing, 1991), 129-266, p. 135.

¹¹⁷ Smith et al., 1937, p. 48.

¹¹⁸ Gobat, 2005, p. 218.

throughout the occupation. However, contrary to the Guardia Hacienda, the Juezes came under the “complete control” of the GN but not until September 17 1930.¹¹⁹ The Juezes had even been under the GN’s control from November 10 1928, however this arrangement was in the process of being discontinued in July 1929.¹²⁰

In the Letter of Instruction, where the Juezes came under the “complete control” of the GN, there was a particular stress “that the juezs[sic] de mesta should be forbidden to use the authority of their office for the purpose of bringing political pressure.”¹²¹ However, this was not as straightforward a task for the GN officers. The DC Chontales, Fredrick M. Howard reported at the beginning of the election campaign in May 1932: “The local officials are commencing to use the Juezes de mestas for purposes of propaganda and it appears to me that the juezes have received orders to ‘bear down’.”¹²²

The same GN officer, Howard, formerly held the opinion that the Juezes could be useful tools and could increase the efficiency of the GN. “Juezes de Mesta and Canton are certainly working fine, under the direction of the Department commander. [...]Juezes de Mestas and Cantones [...] was[sic] a wonderful aid to the Guardia Nacional during the month, saving time and animals.”¹²³ The DC Estelí, Roscoe Arnett, wrote “[s]chools for Juezes de mesta are being held [...] and an increase in their efficiency has been noted” in his MRE March 1931.¹²⁴ Not only could the Juezes be used to alleviate work load of the GN. Then AC Central, Matthews noted about the Juezes that they had “been reporting regularly [and] these rural officials can be utilized to good advantage for intelligence work.”¹²⁵

¹¹⁹ “CONFIDENTIAL LETTER OF INSTRUCTION”, 17091930, USNA/RG127/E202/Box16/84.0 Electoral Mission 2 of 2; in the letter of instruction the arrangement there was some doubt as to whether this would become the permanent or no. No evidence has been found which revokes this arrangement.

¹²⁰ “General Order156-1928”, 10111928, USNA/RG127/E38(A)/Box24/N-45.536 Nicaragua – Guardia Nacional – General Orders (1928); “General Order 79-1929”, 09071929 USNA/RG127/E38(A)/N-47.537 Nicaragua – Guardia Nacional – General Orders (1929) Continued.

¹²¹ “CONFIDENTIAL LETTER OF INSTRUCTION”, 17091930, USNA/RG127/E202/Box16/84.0 Electoral Mission 2 of 2

¹²² DC Chontales to JDGN, “Political propaganda.”, 06051932, USNA/RG127/E202/Box2/9.0.

¹²³ DC Chontales to JDGN, “MRE Chontales June 1931”, 30061931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box3/21.0.

¹²⁴ DC Estelí to JDGN, “MRE Estelí March 1931”, 31031931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box2/11.0 Monthly reports of events.

¹²⁵ AC Central to JDGN, “MRE Central Area September 1930”, 14101930, USNA/RG127/E202/Box 2/12.0; AC Matthews later became JDGN.

On the other hand, some of the GN officers were skeptical of the performance and negative to the service of the Juezes. The DC in Rivas, Emory E. Larson was not particularly impressed with the service the Juezes were performing. After a promising report on the Juezes in the MRE January 1931 Larson reported that “Jueces[*sic*] de Mesta are continuing their work under supervision of the Guardia but are not measuring up to a very high standard in their performance of their duties.”¹²⁶ When the last GN post on the island of Ometepe was removed the Juezes performed well, but in the rest of the department “the only ones worth anything are the ones issued permits.”¹²⁷

The GN’s differences might be explained geographically along the lines of Edelstein’s theory of why occupations fail and succeed. Both Matthews in the Central Area and Arnett in Estelí were in departments bordering Nueva Segovia, where Sandino’s army was more active than any other department in Nicaragua.¹²⁸ The Juezes comparatively better service might function in line with Edelstein’s “second critical variable” of success, that the occupier and occupied had a “commonly perceived threat.”¹²⁹ This would require that the population, including the Juezes, along with the GN considered Sandino’s army an external threat. An “[e]xternal threat [...] makes the occupation more palatable to an occupied population. If the occupier provides vital security to the occupied territory, the citizens will welcome the occupier.”¹³⁰ This would imply that the further away from the threat the occupied territory is, the less likely that the occupied would tolerate the occupier. Whether this was the case in Chontales, located on the eastern shore of Lake Nicaragua, is difficult to conclude. Howard had both positive and negative experiences with the Juezes and their work. However, in Rivas, in the south-west corner of Nicaragua, bordering on Costa Rica, there seemed to be a clear relation to the commonly perceived threat, and its geographical location in relation to Sandino’s main area, according to DC Larson’s reports.

Another possible explanation which not necessarily contradicts the above, would imply that the GN officers located closer to the threat were willing to tolerate more abuse on the part of the Juezes. Firstly because it could help in the gathering of intelligence and secondly the

¹²⁶ DC Rivas to JDGN, “MRE Rivas February 1931”, 28021931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box 3/20.0

¹²⁷ DC Rivas to JDGN, “MRE Rivas March 1931”, 31031931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box 3/20.0

¹²⁸ A map of all of the contacts between the USMC/GN and Sandino’s army can be found in Schroeder, 1993, p. 328.

¹²⁹ Edelstein, 2004, p. 61-65.

¹³⁰ Edelstein, 2004, p. 63.

Juezes could do some of their “dirty work”. This would to a degree conform with Schroeder’s argument that after the 1928 presidential elections that the GN officers were as concerned with ensuring democratic practices, but rather that the war against DANSN was the primary objective of the GN in areas bordering on the war zones.¹³¹

Conclusion

The Marines employed different strategies in the encounter with caudillismo. The more commonly reported was to recommend the removal of the civil official when friction occurred, however, the cooperation strategy seemed to give more of an opening to “North-Americanize”. The Municipal elections were not important to the GN officers. Except in the case where the GN’s reputation was at risk of being damaged. The municipal elections were also seen as a method of displaying the efficiency of the GN. In the process of taking over several of the governments former responsibilities the GN was of the opinion that they made the government function more efficient. The GN tried to build efficiency in order to increase their power. This was clearly demonstrated in the GN’s relation to the Guardia Hacienda and the Juezes. Despite that both law enforcement agencies were inclined to be used as instruments in the hands of the caudillos, the Juezes were considered more of a help to the GN while the Guardia Hacienda was seen as mostly a menace and equaled to bandits. Hence the conclusion may be that GN officers were mostly concerned with ensuring that power would be maintained in the hands of the GN. As a consequence the caudillos, who were the power prior to the reestablishment of the GN, had to seize their power.

¹³¹ Schroeder, 1993, p. 378.

5. In Search of Principles

”[M]ilitary forces were used to alter the political behaviour and even the institutions of another country, an act of far greater significance than interposition[...] It might be [considered as] a long-term act to change a dangerous environment to one more hospitable to foreign economic interests.”¹ This was one of the basic principles of the occupations in the post-1898 era, or “reform occupations” as Allan R. Millett has termed the military operations with a similar character to the one in Nicaragua, 1927-1933.²

In this chapter this process of altering behavior and institutions, or “North-Americanizing”, the Nicaraguan society will be examined, from the Marines’ point of view. Certain cultural elements were attempted transferred to the Nicaraguans, both to GN enlisted men and Nicaraguans more broadly. How did the Marines, serving during the occupation in Nicaragua, feel they accomplished this “North-Americanization”? Furthermore, what important barriers to success may be identified which had importance in the Marines’ perceptions of success or failure to change the Nicaraguans and their society. The discussion will be limited the Marines themselves interpreted as the most important features, seen through the eyes of the Marines, and how successful the Marines felt they had been. The cultural elements which the GN officers and Marines tried to have the Nicaraguans embrace, both the Nicaraguan civilian population and the GN, will be examined first. Then the barriers to this process, such as language, culture, and background, will be examined.

“North-Americanization”

In the following sections the process of “North-Americanization” will be examined. First how the GN officers perceived they succeeded in “North-Americanizing” the the Nicaraguan population in general. Then attention will be moved to what and how they perceived their successes in relation to the GN enlisted men.

Building trust in the government

Officially the Marines put the Nicaraguans’ past experiences with their own government as one of the main reasons for the relatively slow progress of reestablishing the GN.

¹ A. Millett, 1991, p. 148.

² A. Millett, 1991, p. 261.

Enlistment in [GN] during the first few months of reorganization were[sic] necessarily slow due to the fact that few Nicaraguans belived[sic] that the Government would actually pay good wages to soldiers, and that if the money should be supplied by the Government that it would not be stolen by the officers as had been the custom in the past.³

The former Nicaraguan officers were to blame as well for the poor progress of the GN. In addition Smith et al. claimed that pressure from “political leaders [...] discourage[d]” Nicaraguans from enlisting, because all recruits “were sworn not to engage in [any] political activities.”⁴ The final reason stated for poor enlistment in the GN was that the coffee harvest offered good wages, and thus made “men reluctant to enlist.”⁵ Millett has agreed with Smith et al. on all of these points, only adding that the four points “combined to hamper recruiting efforts.”⁶ These arguments cannot be accepted without further examination. GN privates made 12USD a month, which at the time was more than what non-skilled labor in Managua earned. In addition to the 12USD a month, the GN enlisted received room and board, clothes (uniforms), and medical benefits which were quite well for the average Nicaraguan.⁷ The Managua police company was the only GN unit which did not receive room and board. However, they were compensated with an additional 9USD a month to cover such expenses.⁸ According to Bulmer-Thomas the “[m]oney wages for coffee workers before the [world economic] depression [in 1929] averaged 25-30 US cents per day in cases where subsistence was also supplied,” or 7.50 USD to 9 USD a month for the four months, from November to February, the coffee harvest in Nicaragua normally lasts.⁹ Thus we may discount the income argument.

The argument that political leaders’ pressure discouraged potential recruits from enlisting would be in contradiction to the two implying distrust in the officers. Why would potential enlistees not trust the officers to pay them their wages, but trust the officers to follow up on

³ Smith et al., 1937, p. 10.

⁴ Smith et al., 1937, p. 10-11.

⁵ Both quotations from Smith et al., 1937, p. 10.

⁶ R. Millett, 1977, p. 67.

⁷ R. Millett, 1977, p. 79.

⁸ “POLICE FORCE, CITY OF MANAGUA”, 04111930, USNA/RG127/E202/Box15/73.0; The document is an interview with the Chief of Police, Managua, GN, Hamilton M.H. Fleming; Flemming was Chief of Police in Managua 21031930-21121931.

⁹ Bulmer-Thomas, *The Political Economy of Central America Since 1920*, p. 60, he added that during the depression the wages fell significantly, to about 0.15USD a day; the monthly salary is based on the assumption that the workers worked 30 days a month.

the clause covering political activities? This leaves us with the only valid reason for poor enlistment being the distrust in the government. In addition to the above mentioned reason for lack of able recruits, the requirement of literacy hampered the recruitment the most, and was soon replaced by a program for educating illiterate recruits.¹⁰

The increase in efficiency the GN officers concluded they brought to the Nicaraguan government, represented in their own view an important improvement for the average Nicaraguan. The DC Chinandega, Rees Skinner, reported in January 1932 that:

Eight new houses have been constructed in the ruins of Chinandega the past year. One of reinforced concrete which cost over ten thousand dollars. Six more are under construction and many more are to be built next year, and it indicates a growing confidence in the ability of the Government to furnish protection for money invested.¹¹

The increased ability to provide security had further consequences as well. Because the Nicaraguans trust the government would help to maintain law and order.

[By giving t]he people in [country] districts [...] a sense of security that they have not had for years.[...] The people of this Department [Chinandega] are becoming very willing to voluntarily come to the Guardia and give information, and during the past month the information so obtained has indicated that the Department is in a very quiet condition.¹²

Here Skinner was describing an example of what Edelstein has termed winning “the hearts and minds of the occupied population.”¹³ The occupier has to provide something the occupied population would not have had without their presence. In a process similar to a trade, the occupied population will tolerate the occupiers’ presence if the occupied felt that the alternative situation would make them worse off.¹⁴

¹⁰ R. Millett, 1977, p. 71.

¹¹ DC Chinandega to JDGN Matthews, “MRE Chinandega December 1931”, 08011932, USNA/RG127/E202/Box3/17.0.

¹² DC Chinandega to JDGN Matthews, “MRE Chinandega July 1931”, 08081931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box3/17.0.

¹³ Edelstein, 2004, p. 58.

¹⁴ Edelstein, 2004, p. 58-9.

Let us create the GN in our image

The GN was to “have a most high *Espirit de Corps*.” Just as with the USMC, the *esprit de corps* was meant to create a distinct loyalty to the GN. Grossman argues that, “[i]t helped overcome partisanship of the recruit. [i]t also placed the Guardia separate from Nicaraguan civil society and politics. The Guardia did not shout , ‘Viva Nicaragua’, that was a Sandinista slogan, but ‘Viva la Guardia’.”¹⁵ In addition this *esprit* might be viewed as an attempt to rid or dissolve the continuance of *personalismo*, the former Nicaraguan institution of loyalty based upon personal relationships to the officer, not the cause, nation, or organization.¹⁶ Other strategies were employed to avoid having the GN enlisted men develop similar personal relationships to their Marine commanders. A system of rotation was implemented to avoid that personal relationships developed between the enlisted GN and their Marine commanders.¹⁷ However, “such efforts enjoyed little success”¹⁸ and the enlisted men kept acting as before. Even some of the GN officers valued and took advantage of *personalismo* to have better control over “their” men.¹⁹

The above mentioned intelligence officer Victor F. Bleasdale left no doubt as to the importance of the Marines in reestablishment of the GN. “[T]he new Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua whose whole future existence and success in the hands of your [MGC Lejeune’s] Marines.”²⁰ Bleasdale noted already in August 1928 what impact the Marines’ efforts were having on the GN.

[Y]our Marines have brought peace and order to all inhabited areas of Nicaragua and through the medium of the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua,[...] I feel that peace and order will prevail in this country for all time to come [...], or until the influence of the U.S. Marine Corps touch has been lost in this Nicaraguan military organization.²¹

¹⁵ Grossman, 1996, p. 215; Sandinista refers to any member of Sandino’s army.

¹⁶ R. Millett, 2010, *Searching for Stability: The U.S. Development of Constabulary Forces in Latin America and the Philippines*, p. 108.

¹⁷ R. Millett, 1977, p. 75.

¹⁸ R. Millett, 1977, p. 125.

¹⁹ Schroeder, 1998, p. 242.

²⁰ Bleasdale to MGC Lejeune, “[untitled letter]”, 01061928, USNA/RG127/E43(A)/Box28/ GN. GN-2; Correspondence of Intelligence Section. 9 Mar-1 Aug 28.

²¹ Bleasdale to MGC Lejeune, “[untitled letter]”, 01081928, USNA/RG127/E43(A)/Box28/ GN. GN-2; Correspondence of Intelligence Section. 9 Mar-1 Aug 28.; Bleasdale added that other “outside nations” could potentially “require Nicaragua to wage war.”

Within fifteen months of reestablishing the GN, Bleasdale felt that the Marines' "influence" was so great that the only domestic threat to Nicaraguan "peace and order" was the loss of "the U.S. Marine Corps touch." During the occupation the Marines utilized several techniques to further instill their "influence". One of them was "a prize of \$0.25" for the GN enlisted who presented "the cleanest clothing, rifle, equipment, and neatest appearance" and an equal prize for the GN enlisted "judged to be the most proficient in the manual of arms," at the Saturday inspection.²² This scheme came into place after a trial period in the Managua police company.

[The] above prize has been awarded each week[...], and it is my opinion that it is an unqualified success. Whether it will remain so or whether the men will become slack is a question, but it seems to me that the effects will be beneficial in the long run. The first time that the prize was awarded only two men were in the running[...] The last [third] week at least ten men were selected from which to make the final choice, and it became a question finally of brass work on the slings, in order to determine who the winner should be. [...] It is earnestly recommended that the idea be continued.²³

Chief of Police Flemming felt that the increased attention to detail and competition he had experienced in the trial period would materialize in the long run. Whether or not these prizes actually did so was not investigated as far as I can tell from the available sources. The order making the scheme permanent was revoked by JDGN Matthews in May 1931, without any reason being given for its discontinuance.²⁴

With the withdrawal rapidly approaching JDGN Matthews wrote to MGC Ben H. Fuller in "a brief discussion of various points."

[T]he general impression [here is] that the Nicaraguan people would be overjoyed to see the American occupation terminate if they could trust themselves to handle the situation afterwards. Prominent Nicaraguans freely express their opinion of doubt as to the ability of any Nicaraguan Government to hold the reins of power once the American Forces are gone and this is particularly true in regards to [...] the Guardia.²⁵

²² "General Order 31-1930", 12051930, USNA/RG127/E38(A)/25/ N-47.538 Nicaragua – Guardia Nacional – General Orders (1930) Continued.

²³ Chief of Police Managua Fleming to JDGN McDougal, "Prize money for best man at inspection", 02041930, USNA/RG127/E202/Box15/73.0.

²⁴ "General Order 26-1931", 07051931, 38/25/ N-47.539 Nicaragua – Guardia Nacional – General Orders (1931).

²⁵ JDGN Matthews to MGC Fuller, "Re- Military Situation in Nicaragua", 14101932, USNA/RG127/E18(A)/Box1/1375-15 NICARAGUA – Financial Reports (1928-32).

JDGN Matthews was afraid that because of the Nicaraguans' lack of confidence in their own government, to follow the example set by the Marines might constitute a problem with regard to maintaining the Nicaraguan peace. However, this was not due to the GN, its enlisted and commissioned Nicaraguan GN personnel. "No armed force exists in Nicaragua or Central America today which can stand up to the [GN], and it is doubtful if enough arms and ammunition are available in Nicaragua to even make the attempt worth while."²⁶ The Marines had succeeded to such a degree that the GN by its organization and possible use of force would deter any attempts at toppling it. The only hope of bringing down the GN would be an uprising from within the GN itself. This was not something Matthews saw as "beyond the realm of possibility" because:

[T]he political hatred which exists between the two parties might split the Guardia.[...] A possible thought along these lines is that the present Guardia personnel is probably too highly trained and conversant in things military to faithfully serve under the less informed military superiors who will undoubtedly be appointed over them.²⁷

Matthews was referring to the problem of transferring the command of the GN to Nicaraguans, discussed in more detail below. The higher posts in the GN after Marine withdrawal were to be filled through appointment from civilian life and not promoted from within the GN. This could possibly lead GN commissioned and enlisted who were, in Matthews' opinion, the better educated militarily and more experienced possibly to revolt against their less knowledgeable superiors who would try to bring the GN of its nonpartisan character. Matthews' distrust of the Nicaraguan politicians and officials was only equaled by the rather vague trust in the GN enlisted and commissioned Nicaraguans, or hope that the GN, would not allow its character to be corrupted by the "political hatred" or become a partisan organization. Matthews based this on the "strict policy of impartiality" the GN had always adhered to. "Suitable men have been enlisted as they applied without regard to their political affiliations and [...] the regulations prohibit participation in politics."²⁸ "[T]his policy [which] should be strictly continued [after U.S. withdrawal]" had made sure that "all officers and enlisted men with three or more years' service [could] be assumed to be non-partisan in

²⁶ JDGN Matthews to MGC Fuller, "Re- Military Situation in Nicaragua", 14101932, USNA/RG127/E18(A)/Box1/1375-15 NICARAGUA – Financial Reports (1928-32).

²⁷ JDGN Matthews to MGC Fuller, "Re- Military Situation in Nicaragua", 14101932, USNA/RG127/E18(A)/Box1/1375-15 NICARAGUA – Financial Reports (1928-32).

²⁸ JDGN to US minister Nicaragua Hanna, [untitled letter], 17111932, USNA/RG127/E197/Box1/235: 1932.

carrying out their duties and in their loyalty to their country.”²⁹ The Nicaraguan GN enlisted had seen what impartiality was, and had themselves reaped its benefits. “Sudden improvement in recruiting will enable to be eliminated by discharge as they can be replaced by a better type of men. This will soon produce an even greater improvement in the type of Guardia [enlisted men] in this Area.”³⁰ Their close relation to the Marines was important as well, they had seen what impartiality was and at least in theory knew how to apply it.

Barriers to North-Americanization

The GN officers were influenced by certain factors which entered into the process of determining whether Nicaraguans had “North-Americanized”. First we will see how the Marines’ background and former association with the GN might have shaped their view of how successful the GN’s efforts had been. Then we will see what challenges the GN on the Mosquito Coast met in term of racial and linguistic differences. Finally an examination of what factor went into recommendations for officers who would take the Marines place in the GN after their withdrawal January 2 1933.

Cultural differences in understanding Nicaragua

The above mentioned Bleasdale, this time being part of the U. S. electoral mission in 1930, commented on what he believed to be “[s]ome [of the] illusions entertained by the inhabitants of Nueva Segovia.”³¹ Bleasdale pronounced quite forcefully on what, in his opinion, the population thought of the GN and what should be included in the GN’s powers to gain even more confidence in the population.

(a) They think that the Guardia Nacional has the judicial authority necessary to try by trial and sentence bandits and other criminals and blame them for not doing so.

[...]

(d) They think that the Guardia Nacional has the judicial authority necessary to try by trial and sentence a bandit that has participated in killing of Guardia and wonder why it has never been done so.

(e) They think the Guardia Nacional [...] should be able to furnish them security of life and property.

(f) They think that the Guardia Nacional will be able to furnish them security of life and property some day in the future. They do not know that they will never have security of life and property until they

²⁹ JDGN to US minister Nicaragua Hanna, [untiled letter], 17111932, USNA/RG127/E197/Box1/235: 1932.

³⁰ AC east to JDGN, “MRE April 1930”, 03051930, USNA/RG127/E202/Box2/14.0 4 of 4.

³¹ Bleasdale to Chief of Electoral Mission 1930, “Political, military, and economic situation in Department of Nueva Segovia, Nicaragua”, 31101930, USNA/RG127/E202/Box16/84.0 Electoral mission 1 of 2.

have *judicial officials* here that will sentence murderers to death and mete out drastic punishment to other criminals and bandits.³²

Bleasdale was explicit in stating that the population in Nueva Segovia had come to embrace the impartiality shown by the GN and USMC as an important and valuable trait of government officials. An important addendum to Bleasdale's comments would be that he himself had been a part of the GN as the first intelligence officer and the first operations and training officer of the JDGN's staff. This might have influenced his opinion of what was necessary to extend the benefits of rule of law and civilization to the Nicaraguans, was that the GN had to be given even more power to assert their values over Nicaragua.³³ Bleasdale was clear as to who had been able to embrace, or appreciate, the nonpartisan character of the GN. The judicial officials, here being interpreted as the elite, had not been able to follow the GN's lead in giving everybody the impartiality, or as USMC Louis E. Fagan put it earlier, "[t]he idea of giving every one a square deal is too much for their precious interest."³⁴ The "inhabitants" here being interpreted as the masses, given Bleasdale's reference to their ignorance of why security was not within reach unless the judiciary would sentence criminals.

A somewhat different account of the conditions was given by Pedro Del Valle, a member of the 1930 electoral mission and a veteran of the USMC occupation of Haiti. Del Valle did not make assumptions or descriptions about "illusions entertained by the inhabitants" as Bleasdale put it. He relied more heavily on first hand information in his account of the conditions of what part of the population had been more North-Americanized.

The mayor of El Sauce informed me that the [Liberal] party had united behind the candidate, Mr. Germán Sequeira, all previous differences, if any, having been buried before my arrival. The Conservatives are weak in numbers in both the districts now about to elect deputies.[...] The El Sauce candidate, Dr. Tijerías [...] is a very intelligent and forceful man. He enjoys a great deal [of] personal

³² Bleasdale to Chief of Electoral Mission 1930, "Political, military, and economic situation in Department of Nueva Segovia, Nicaragua", 31101930, USNA/RG127/E202/Box16/84.0 Electoral mission 1 of 2.; letters "b" and "c" in the same document were identical to "a"(b) and "d"(c) except "Guardia Nacional" being substituted with "U.S. Marine Corps force here."; italics mine.

³³ Bleasdale was Intelligence officer 09091927-07041929 and Operations and Training officer 01021928-07041929. Smith et al., 1937, p. 227-228; Bleasdale was quoted in a report from the Chairman of the U.S. Electoral Mission, "One has only to observe the Guardia in the field to realize that they make a wonderful police and military force for this country. Their courage and efficiency in battle [...] tend to prove that they are among the most able jungle warfare fighters in the world." Chairman U.S. Electoral Mission to JDGN, [untitled], 23081932, USNA/RG127/E2027Box16/84.0 Electoral Mission 1 of 2.

³⁴ CO 43rd company to CO 2nd Brigade, "Removal of Chief of Police Boaco", 3051927, USNA/RG127/E225/Box2/43rd Co R of E 1927.

popularity in the El Sauce district than does the Liberal candidate, Sequeira, who is an extraordinarily acquisitive[sic] person and who owns everything that everybody in the area [the northern parts of the department of León] got careless about. An Extremely sagacious money maker, Sequeira is yet a person of inferior qualifications as a representative. Gustavo Arguello Cervantes, a large land owner and also a Liberal, as well as several other disinterested Liberals have admitted that the Conservative candidate was the better of the two. Nevertheless there is little doubt of the outcome.³⁵

The elite, in Del Valle's opinion, was more able of acquiring the American value of electing the best man, while the masses, perhaps on account of their ignorance and their clientistic relations to their leaders, were the ones who did not see the best man, but only their party's candidate. The question of who was correct in their account of the transfer of culture is not within the scope of this thesis, since that would require an examination of the Nicaraguans and their culture. However, what might have shaped these two different accounts do.³⁶

Bleasdale's background has already been mentioned, and that his views may have been influenced by his former association to the GN. Del Valle on the other hand had a very different background. He did not have the same association to the GN as Bleasdale and maybe even more important to grasp his understanding of Nicaraguan society is his background.

Del Valle was born into a middle-class home in the soon to be U.S. annexed Spanish-Caribbean island of Puerto Rico in 1893.³⁷ Thus he may have been the object of similar civilizing attempts as he himself was part of in Nicaragua. Even though his tour of duty in Nicaragua was limited, he had some insights as to how successful the occupation had been up until that point. The fact that he had not been associated with the GN at an earlier stage of the occupation might as well have made him less biased. Being a native of Puerto Rico it is not unlikely that his knowledge of the inner workings of Latin-American caudillismo was more refined than Bleasdale's.³⁸ Their different backgrounds may have shaped their respective views, but the USMC was an important factor in shaping the individual Marine's culture as well. Renda has argued that Del Valle had embraced an American, U.S., identity by the time

³⁵ Del Valle to Chief of the Electoral Mission 1930, "Political, military and economic situation, report on", 29101930, USNA/RG127/E202/Box16/84.0 Electoral mission 1 of 2.

³⁶ Gobat, 2005, argues throughout his book that the elite was more Americanized.

³⁷ Renda, 2001, p 61-2; Puerto Rico annexed after the Spanish-American War of 1898.

³⁸ Beezley, 1969, p. 345, describes caudillismo as a Spanish Latin-American phenomenon, and one could assume that the former Spanish colony of Puerto Rico would have a somewhat similar political system as the rest of Spanish Latin-America.

he was stationed in Haiti.³⁹ His opinion of who would be the best man to serve would support Renda's argument that Del Valle had in fact embraced a North American identity, at least by the time he was stationed in Nicaragua. Dr. Tijerias was described just as a real progressive era Yankee would have done of the man most capable of holding office. This according to historian Richard Hofstadter was a "[man] of the highest moral qualities [...]. It was assumed that such qualities were indestructible and that decent men, once found and installed in office, would remain decent. [And] [i]f the laws are the right laws, and if they can be enforced by the right men [...] everything would be better."⁴⁰ Del Valle having embraced a North American identity might be seen in his description of Sequeira as well. He was "an extraordinarily acquisitive person [and] sagacious moneymaker,"⁴¹ and could be seen as a representative of the Nicaraguan version of big business. Almost as an anti-big business spokesman, Del Valle supported Tijerias.⁴² In the same manner as with good qualities in good men, the qualities of Sequeira were seen as indestructible. He would remain a "sagacious money maker" and maybe even be inclined to make money while in office through corruption. Even though Del Valle had embraced a North American identity one may still assume that his background made his knowledge of Spanish, probably being his mother tongue, was superior to that of Bleasdale. Very few of the GN officers spoke Spanish fluidly and Bleasdale acknowledged his lack of proficiency in Spanish when he wrote MGC LeJeune that he was "struggling along with the language."⁴³ Thus it would not be an unfair assumption to make that Del Valle's Spanish was superior to Bleasdale's. Language skills being important, it does not fully explain why Del Valle's and Bleasdale's opinions differed fundamentally, often the American officers who did not speak Spanish had interpreters.⁴⁴ Even though interpretation as a rule leaves out some cultural aspects of the communication, it would be unlikely that this alone could have caused such a large difference in their accounts.⁴⁵ However, the fact that many of the Marines had to rely on interpreters constituted a source of misinformation, in addition to the difficulties of interpretation.

³⁹ Renda, 2001, p. 61-2; this argument cannot be accepted without comment. Renda's conclusion have been based on a 1973 Oral history interview with Del Valle, and his memory might have been playing some tricks on him; The U.S. occupation of Haiti was 1915-1934.

⁴⁰ Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), p. 201-2.

⁴¹ Del Valle to Chief of the Electoral Mission 1930, "Political, military and economic situation, report on", 29101930, USNA/RG127/E202/Box16/84.0 Electoral mission 1 of 2.

⁴² Hofstadter, 1955, p. 225-26.

⁴³ Bleasdale to MGC Lejeune, "[untitled letter]", 01061928, 43(A)/28/ GN. GN-2; Correspondence of Intelligence Section. 9 Mar-1 Aug 28.

⁴⁴ Schroeder, 1993, p. 397 and R. Millett, 1977, p. 71.

⁴⁵ Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Små steder – store spørsmål: Innføring i sosialantropologi*, 3rd ed. (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget 2010), p. 223.

The interpreters had to act as guides in the rural and more remote areas as well. Gobat has pointed out that these guides for a large part came from the elite, because of their US education they were the ones the Marines most commonly socialized with. These elite guides had interests in showing their version of the countryside. The Marine would see the countryside through the interpreter's eyes. The interpreters' elite status could make them important figures in the caudillo networks in the area they acted as guides. Thus they could "kill two birds with one stone" when they acted as interpreters and guides. Showing the countryside to the Marine and mobilizing and enforcing clientistic relations.⁴⁶

Del Valle's cultural knowledge from growing up on Puerto Rico, with a similar political culture, may have given him a different take on Nicaraguan society. This is evident with regard to how and from whom he was given information. Del Valle spoke to leading citizens of the department for his information. Bleasdale utilized this strategy as well, however, his findings were rather vague and to a degree contrary to his findings where he put forward his "illusions entertained by the inhabitants" where he was not as confident in the elite's willingness to adopt the impartiality of the GN.

Every prominent Nicaraguan I have talked to [...] about the political situation here, has expressed himself in a manner indicating his appreciation of the impartiality of the American Electoral Mission, U. S. Marines, and Guardia Nacional and that these organizations have done all within their power to issue a free, fair, and impartial election.⁴⁷

The contradiction here would be that the above stated "illusions entertained by the inhabitants" implicitly states that the elite, through the "judicial officials," was not willing to adopt the impartiality of the US forces. Del Valle was explicitly stating who he got his information from, while Bleasdale left it at "prominent Nicaraguans [he had] talked to" which leaves us with more inaccuracy than Del Valle did. Schroeder's study of the US led forces' intelligence capabilities found that the US officers' success was dependent on the individual officer's ability to infuse himself into the local and regional caudillo networks, in a very similar fashion as we have seen Keimling did in Managua, to obtain reliable intelligence.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Gobat, 2005, p. 210-11.

⁴⁷ Bleasdale to Chief of Electoral Mission 1930, "Political, military, and economic situation in Department of Nueva Segovia, Nicaragua", 31101930, USNA/RG127/E202/Box16/84.0 Electoral mission 1 of 2.

⁴⁸ Schroeder, 2004, "4 Intelligence Acquisition", point (5).

Race and language

On the Mosquito Coast the population was different from that of the Pacific plains and the northern highlands. The Mosquito Coast did not come under Nicaraguan rule until Zelaya's presidency in 1894.⁴⁹ Prior to that it had been a British protectorate, and an independent kingdom from 1860.⁵⁰ A large percentage of the people living on the Mosquito Coast were imported labor working on the fairly recently established banana and old timber plantations, or engaged in trade. The imported labor largely hailed from the British slave communities on the islands in the Caribbean. Having a mixed Mestizo and African-American racial composition, these communities experienced considerable racial tension between the imported African-American labor, and the even more recently arrived Mestizo population. To complicate this matter even further there were indigenous tribes that had been living there since before the Spanish conquest of Nicaragua in the 1520's.⁵¹ The officer who established the GN in this part of Nicaragua, AC Albert B. Sage was well aware of the racial tension when he wrote to the JDGN:

Recruiting will represent a problem of color rather than lack of men. [T]here is a considerable feeling between the light [mestizo] and the dark [African-American] natives. [I]t will be essential that some of the darker natives be enlisted as there are not enough of the light ones to go around.⁵²

However this "feeling" or racial tension was something Sage did not consider a problem for the GN. "This, I am confident can be ironed out with the proper discipline."⁵³ The Marines were not accustomed to this racial mix, as evidenced by the fact that during World War I the USMC was the only branch of the US armed forces that did not enlist any African-Americans.⁵⁴ Sage's confidence in his and his fellow GN officers' ability to "iron out" this problem might be ascribed to how the Marines viewed themselves in relation to the "natives". Schroeder has in his studies found that the Marines, through all of the occupations in the post-

⁴⁹ Bulmer-Thomas, 1987, p. 3 and note 5 p. 338; the question of sovereignty was not completely resolved until 1906, see Woodward, 1999, p. 134-5.

⁵⁰ The actual independence of the Mosquito Kingdom was very limited and it was probably still very much under British influence and later US influence.

⁵¹ Woodward, 1999, p. 181; The British influence was large and many of the larger settlements on the Mosquito Coast had only an English names, or an English in addition to the Spanish one. Examples: Sp. San Juan del Norte, Eng. Greytown, Bluefields (only English)

⁵² AC East to JDGN, "[untitled letter]", 03031928, USNA/RG127/E197/Box1/184.5 Area of the East.

⁵³ AC East to JDGN, "[untitled letter]", 03031928, USNA/RG127/E197/Box1/184.5 Area of the East.

⁵⁴ Southern, 2005, p. 187.

1898 era, had become “accustomed to practicing violence against ‘racially inferior’ and culturally ‘backward’ [natives].”⁵⁵ The flip side of this would be that the Marines thought of themselves as racially superior and culturally more advanced than the natives. Thus through the Marines’ superiority would not have problems of leading enlisted personnel of both the “inferior” races. However, Sage may not have been as confident as he made out to be, perhaps because of the lack of experience handling racial tension from the USMC, as he added: “Actual experience in this phase will show us [...] just what the situation will be.”⁵⁶

The light Mestizos were the preferred ones in the GN given Sage’s statement that some of the African-Americans had to be enlisted “as there are not enough light ones to go around.” However, this could be a case of Sage trying to accommodate his statement to what he thought the recipient of this letter, the JDGN, thought, what was the policy in the USMC, or the policy of the GN. As mentioned the USMC was the only branch that did not draft or enlist African-Americans during the World War I, and the GN was created in the image of the USMC.

A possible explanation of the willingness to enlist African-Americans might be that they, being from the British islands in the Caribbean, had English as their mother tongue, as Sage reported on the conditions that “[t]he bulk of the people here are black, [and] English is spoken more than Spanish.”⁵⁷ Even though the African-Americans imported to the Caribbean islands had developed their own Creole language, “a pidgin language which has become the mother tongue of two or more persons,”⁵⁸ the Creole language was very similar to English. This has been assumed to be the consequence of the fact that most of the African-Americans, or more correctly Africans, imported to the West Indies, were from different west African societies and had no common language, “they acquired a simplified variety of English in order to communicate with their British rulers and one another.[...] It was not ‘proper’ English; but then, because many of its lexical items resembled English ones, there was no reason to think it might be anything other than English.”⁵⁹ Thus there would be less of a problem communicating with the African-American portion of the population and that

⁵⁵ Schroeder, 1998, p. 221.

⁵⁶ AC East to JDGN, “[untitled letter]”, 03031928, USNA/RG127/E197/Box1/184.5 Area of the East.

⁵⁷ AC East to JDGN, [untitled letter], 03031928, USNA/RG127/E197/Box1/184.5 Area of the East.

⁵⁸ Eriksen, 1994, p. 33, my translation; A pidgin language is defined as a primitive language developed to enable communication between two peoples who do not have a common language.

⁵⁹ Alicia Beckford Wassink, “Historic Low Prestige and Seeds of Change: Attitudes toward Jamaican Creole”. *Language in Society*, 28 (no. 1, 1999), 57-92, p. 58.

everyday communication, such as rifle training and drill instructions, would flow rather unproblematic and at least better than with the Spanish speaking Mestizo population on the Pacific plains and the Northern Highlands. R. Millett has argued that the GN officers' lack of proficiency in Spanish caused problems for the GN officers in the Spanish speaking portions of Nicaragua throughout the occupation. "[S]ome of the Marines had previous experience training constabulary forces in Haiti or the Dominican Republic, few spoke Spanish, and had therefore to rely on interpreters or gestures to get their instructions understood."⁶⁰

The above mentioned racial tension might have played a role as well, and might have warranted that the GN enlisted privates of both groups of "natives" as a solution to that problem. This may be seen as a way of legitimizing the GN on the Mosquito Coast by preventing unnecessary problems for the GN. By enlisting "natives" from both of groups, the GN would avoid making one of the ethnic groups a ruling class through having a monopoly on enlistment in the GN. Other considerations might have been important as well, such as making the GN's doctrine of impartiality unambiguous, and as expression of the contemporary movements in the US of establishing a government based on merit.

A report was received by me [where] there was [a] comment to the effect that we intended to draw a color line in the Guardia. [...] I have let it be known that the qualification is citizenship, health and willingness to take the oath and that we have no lines of demarcation in complexion.⁶¹

This was considered an important feature in handling possible political unrest which might arise from the racial tensions which already existed on the Mosquito Coast. In an inspection report by the Commander of the Special Service Squadron, this was stated explicitly: "The [GN] of the east coast apparently has things well in hand. Since many of its members are recruited from the Jamaicans or the Jamaican-Nicaraguans, it is believed that they will keep all situations that may arise politically well in hand."⁶²

⁶⁰ Millett, 1977, p. 71; the point that this problem was present throughout the occupation is based on that Millett used the final annual report of the GN for the year of 01101931-30091932.

⁶¹ AC East to JDGN, "Intelligence report of Incidents", 18031928, USNA/RG127/E197/Box1/184.5 Area of the East.

⁶² Commander Special Service Squadron to CO 2nd Brig., "Guardia Nacional on the East Coast of Nicaragua", 28121929, USNA/RG127/E204/Box2/55 Comspersion 1 of 3; the poor communications between western Nicaragua and the Mosquito coast made it less troublesome for the commander of the Special Service Squadron to travel to Bluefields by ship from the Panama Canal Zone, than it was for the JDGN to travel over land and by boat from Managua.

Culturally the Mosquito Coast was different as well. Language was and is of course an important part of culture and cannot be completely separated from other cultural elements. However, culture has several other components. One such would be way of life. The plantations relied on wage labor to do the work on the plantations, man the river barges, and load the bananas and timber onto steamships. Thus wage labor was a well-established institution and was observed by Sage: “There is a great difference between the different classes of labor. The black element being satisfied to work a week or two, accumulate a few dollars and lay off until it is spent while the natives from the interior work right through the season.”⁶³

Combined these the cultural and linguistic differences on the Mosquito Coast might have contributed to the newly appointed AC East, Charles A. Wynn, making the following comment in June on the condition of the GN in Bluefields.

It has been particularly gratifying to note the smart, military appearance of the troops, with their spotless clean clothes, uniform carriage, and shining metal work on web equipment. During the several command positions occupied by the Area Commander in other Areas in the Republic of Nicaragua, he has never seen a more smartly turned-out body of troops than those in BLUEFIELDS, nor a better military organization than that of the Eastern Area.⁶⁴

Changing command

The Marines were to have withdrawn from Nicaragua by the inauguration of the Nicaraguan President, January 1st 1933. Upon withdrawal the officer posts, the Marines had held, were to be filled by Nicaraguans. A Nicaraguan Military Academy, *Academia Militar*, was established in April 1930 to prepare Nicaraguan takeover of the GN. The importance of the Academia Militar in the process of transitioning command of the GN to Nicaraguans is a point of some discussion in the literature. Schroeder has argued that the higher posts in the GN were filled through appointment from the limited classes of the Academia Militar, which was established to “train a cadre of senior officers.”⁶⁵ Schroeder builds upon this argument by arguing that many of the Nicaraguans educated at the Academia Militar were from prominent families. These Academia Militar educated Nicaraguans were to populate the uppermost

⁶³ AC East to JDGN, “Intelligence report of Incidents”, 18031928, USNA/RG127/E197/Box1/184.5 Area of the East.

⁶⁴ AC East to JDGN, “MRE East June 1931”, 04071931, USNA/RG127/E202/Box2/14.0 3 of 4.

⁶⁵ Schroeder, 1998, p. 246.

echelons of the GN, and that the Academia Militar thus only contributed to a “deep continuity with the past.”⁶⁶

Even though Schroeder’s statement of who came to populate the higher posts in the GN was filled mostly from the elite probably is correct, the role of the Academia Militar is not mentioned by one word in the document Schroeder has cited.⁶⁷ On the other hand R. Millett argues that the Academia Militar was not filled by the traditional Conservative elite. Even though the education requirements of the Academia Militar excluded “the mass of the population.”⁶⁸ The admissions, according to Millett, were predominantly from the small middle class and artisan sectors in Nicaragua. This was caused of several different factors. All of the admissions to the Academia Militar, after an initial screening by the JDGN, had to be approved by the Nicaraguan president Moncada, thus candidates with connections to the Liberal Party would be preferred. The Liberal Party drew “its strongest support from urban artisans and businessmen, while wealthy rural families were more likely to support the Conservatives.”⁶⁹ The wealthier elite families’ sons would also be less likely to apply for admission because they “found little attraction in the life or the salary of a second lieutenant.”⁷⁰ However, Gobat has found, that there were members of the most prominent Conservative families who attended the Academia Militar, but that they did not contribute to any continuity other than in name. Since the Nicaraguans who were trained by the Marines in the Academia Militar “tended to embrace the institution’s antielite identity” and “assimilated much of the antielitism of their U.S. superiors.”⁷¹ Despite this R. Millett seems to be correct in his discussion of the role of the Academia Militar, given JDGN Matthews stated that the Academia Militar would “be able [...] to fill the all except higher grades” of the GN by the withdrawal of the Marines in January 1933.⁷²

⁶⁶ Schroeder, 1998, p. 246; the document Schroeder has cited as evidence of this claim that the Academia Militar educated sons of elite families and contributed to a “deep continuity with the past” does not have any reference to the Academia Militar, nor does any other document in the same folder refer to the Academia Militar. However, several of the men recommended for higher posts had education from Military Academy during Zelaya’s presidency mentioned as a positive.

⁶⁷ The source Schroeder cites is: AC Central to JDGN, “Recommendations of personnel for higher officers in the Guardia”, 27081932, USNA/RG127/E198/Box2/Recommendations of personnel for higher officer rank in Guardia; my limited knowledge about the Nicaraguan elite’s family names does not put me in a position to say that this is either correct or incorrect; Schroeder, 1998, p. 246.

⁶⁸ R. Millett, 1997, p. 127.

⁶⁹ R. Millett, 1997, p. 127.

⁷⁰ R. Millett, 1997, p. 127.

⁷¹ Gobat, 2005, p. 219-220.

⁷² R. Millett, 1997, p. 127 and FRUS 1931 Vol. II, p. 846; despite Millett’s quotation (p. 127) is not to the letter there is no difference in meaning.

Upon withdrawal of the U.S. GN officers from Nicaragua, the higher officer post of the GN was to be filled by appointment “from civilian life, and [have to] come from the better class of Nicaraguans who have sufficient education and character to measure up to the responsibilities that will be required of them.”⁷³ JDGN Matthews believed that “strictly speaking [...] there are none wholly qualified by education and training to fill these ranks according to the approved standard of modern military service.”⁷⁴ Nonetheless all of the GN ACs and DCs were to recommend men to fill these positions based on “former military experience”, having “filled satisfactorily positions of prominence in civilian life”, and those who had “demonstrated their patriotism and ability as leaders of men.”⁷⁵

Veteran of the occupation of Haiti, AC Central Walter G. Sheard was one out of many who interpreted cooperation with the GN as a good measurement of having “demonstrated patriotism.” Sheard in his recommendations wrote:

Celestino Cantarero[...] appears patriotic, has always cooperated with the Guardia whether or not holding office.

[...]

Miguel Blandon [...] is a man of decision, intelligence and force. He has cooperated with the Guardia to the fullest extent.⁷⁶

DC Granada and Masaya, Stewart B. O'Neill, seemed to include loyalty to the U.S. government as demonstration of patriotism, when he wrote: “CLARENCE A. BURGHEIM – Born in Texas.[...] Is a doctor of medicine.[...] When the United States entered the world war he offered his services to our government.”⁷⁷ O'Neill's logic might have been that anyone who would show their loyalty to the US government would not allow the US created GN to be corrupted. O'Neill included proficiency in English as a relevant quality for appointment in the

⁷³ JDGN to all ACs and DCs, “Recommendations of personnel for higher officers in the Guardia”, 18081932, USNA/RG127/E198/Box2/Recommendations of personnel for higher officer rank in Guardia.

⁷⁴ JDGN to all ACs and DCs, “Recommendations of personnel for higher officers in the Guardia”, 18081932, USNA/RG127/E198/Box2/Recommendations of personnel for higher officer rank in Guardia.

⁷⁵ JDGN to all ACs and DCs, “Recommendations of personnel for higher officers in the Guardia”, 18081932, USNA/RG127/E198/Box2/Recommendations of personnel for higher officer rank in Guardia.

⁷⁶ AC Central to JDGN, “Recommendations of personnel for higher officers in the Guardia”, 27081932, USNA/RG127/E198/Box2/Recommendations of personnel for higher officer rank in Guardia.

⁷⁷ DC Granada-Masaya to JDGN, “Recommendations of civilians as higher officers in the Guardia Nacional”, 05101932, USNA/RG127/E198/Box2/Recommendations of personnel for higher officer rank in Guardia; underlining in original.

GN as well. “DAVID ARGUELLO[...] [d]oes not speak English.[...] DIEGO VARGAS [...] [s]peaks English.”⁷⁸ How knowing English was to qualify an individual to lead in an all Nicaraguan military organization, O’Neill did not bother to explain. The other GN officers who mentioned English proficiency in their recommendations offered no further explanation as to why that would qualify for appointment in the GN after US withdrawal.

The DC Chinandega, Willett Elmore, interpreted “patriotism” in the same way as AC Sheard and considered proficiency in English as a desired quality in a GN officer. In addition he viewed simply having lived in the US as qualification to appointment. “Francisco Martinez[...] lived in the United States for several years and speaks English.[...] Alberto Baca [...] has been friendly and helpful to the Guardia, and several times in the past has accompanied Guardia patrols.”⁷⁹

Conclusion

The GN officers believed they had succeeded in winning the hearts and minds of the population by trading security for information. With regard to the GN enlisted the U.S. officers had managed to instill the esprit d’corps to such a degree that they perceived the GN enlisted as the most important factor in keeping Nicaragua stable after U.S. withdrawal. This perception was influenced by the GN enlisted men’s physical appearance and not whether they had actually changed.

Several barriers to the perception of “North-Americanization” existed. Former affiliation with the GN seems to have carried some weight in measuring their success. However, more important in the GN officers in the perception of “North-Americanization” was proficiency in English. This carried weight in the GN officers perceptions of the ability of the GN enlisted and the potential Nicaraguan GN officers. The U.S. officers of the GN perceived cooperation with the GN as a sign of Nicaraguan “patriotism”. In addition if one simply had lived in the U.S. as a sign of ability to lead the GN after the Marines withdrew.

⁷⁸ DC Granada-Masaya to JDGN, “Recommendations of civilians as higher officers in the Guardia Nacional”, 05101932, USNA/RG127/E198/Box2/Recommendations of personnel for higher officer rank in Guardia; underlining in original; For other examples of proficiency in English being considered a relevant quality for appointment in the GN see:

⁷⁹ DC Chinandega to JDGN, “Recommendation for higher officers in the Guardia”, 10101932, USNA/RG127/E198/Box2/Recommendations of personnel for higher officer rank in Guardia.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis has been to describe and discuss what the U.S. Marines serving in the *Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua* considered their main objective during the occupation of Nicaragua. In this final concluding chapter I will discuss the findings of the thesis in relation to the research questions raised in the introduction.

The Marines

To understand what the Marines viewed as their main objective it was necessary to examine what being a U.S. Marine amounted to, and what cultural background they had when they arrived in Nicaragua. The U.S. Marines serving in Nicaragua were part of an all white, exclusive, and cohesive group of men. They were bound together by the Marine Corps' mantra "always faithful"; to the nation, the flag, the Marine Corps, and their fellow Marines. The new tasks the Marine Corps was responsible for put such a strain on its manpower resources that it was unable to have its officer corps undergo the formal midcareer training, the other branches of the U.S. armed forces were able to do. Combined with the unconventional battlefield the Marines encountered, the lack of education resulted in pragmatism and anti-intellectualism. They continued doing what was effective, not what was taught in a classroom or written in a manual. In addition it is not unlikely that some of the Marines had a missionary motive with the occupation, and wanted to give the Nicaraguans the "advantages of U.S. civilization."

The Problem

The Marines perceived the problems they faced in Nicaragua as racial and cultural. To the Marines, Nicaraguan culture was fundamentally corrupt. At least one Marine considered the former attempts by Nicaraguan governments to create a well-functioning modern state, as destructive to Nicaragua. Otherwise there would not have been any reason for the U.S., through the Marines, to lend its assistance to Nicaragua. The purpose of the "assistance" was to enable Nicaraguan self-government. The Marines perceived that one of the key obstacles to Nicaraguan self-government was Nicaraguan politics, which as a rule was not characterized by principles such as the betterment of society or nation. It was rather suffused by

partisanship, personal relations, and self-enrichment. The partisanship was not confined to political level but permeated all government agencies and functions, such as law enforcement. Hence, Nicaraguans saw government positions as above all an opportunity for self-enrichment and a method of furthering partisan relations.

However, the problem was not confined to partisanship and corrupt politics. The Marines serving in Nicaragua saw the Nicaraguans as a people of deceitful and crooked liars. They followed their political leaders, caudillos, uncritically and were as a rule not led by moral and legal principles. There was in the view of the Marines a lack of democratic potential in the Nicaraguan people. In combination with the racial composition of the Nicaraguans, the lack of democratic political tradition had led them to enjoy political disorder as a national pastime. In addition, Nicaraguans generally did not possess self-restraint and had extremely poor hygienic standards. This could also be traced back to their culture and a superstition against orderliness. Thus the Nicaraguan people were a threat to the Marines' health, by exposing the Marines to preventable diseases. Even though the U.S. forces in Nicaragua implemented preventive programs the Nicaraguans did not want to take advantage of them. In addition the Marines were at risk from limited association with white people.

In the minds of the Marines, the solution was that Nicaraguan society, politics, and people had to be "North-Americanized". This was to come as a result of one-directional cultural transfer. In the minds of the racially and culturally superior Marines, they had an asymmetric relationship with the inferior Nicaraguans, similar to that of a father or a teacher with their children and students.

The Solution

The Marines utilized two different strategies in order to accomplish the "North-Americanization" in the encounter with local officials. In the first, the GN officer recommended the removal of the official when there was friction between the GN and local officials. In at least one case removal was recommended when no friction had occurred between the official in question and the GN, on the grounds of preserving order. The second strategy utilized cooperation with the official. The GN officer would try to maneuver and position himself within the local caudillo network. In the reported instance this was accomplished by making use of the Nicaraguan inclination to self-enrichment and corruption

to enable a more thorough “North-Americanization”. In the sources the removal strategy occurs more often than the cooperation strategy. Despite this there is reason to believe that the cooperation was more common than what is possible to establish conclusively by the empirical evidence. We may draw that conclusion from the fact that Keimling in his report describes little or no friction once a well-functioning relationship with Nicaraguan officials had been established. Thus there would be no reason to report it to the JDGN. Hence it is not unlikely that other GN officers who did not report friction with local officials may have utilized the same strategy. The relatively good cooperation in Nicaragua compared to Haiti, might also suggest that the cooperation strategy was more commonly utilized than actually reported.

The Marines in the GN tried to display to Nicaraguans that the U.S. approach was the best. The Marines tried to accomplish this through the creation of what they perceived to be a self-driven, self-supporting, impartial, and humane organization dedicated to the welfare of Nicaragua. Thus to avoid confusion with other law enforcement forces, in the case such did not measure up to the same standards as themselves, they wanted them removed or disbanded. I have showed that this was not as easily accomplished as the literature suggests. The Guardia Hacienda was active in Chinandega at least until April 1930. The Juezes did not become responsible to the GN until September 1930, which suggests that Gobat and Millett are mistaken in their statements about the Juezes. Even though the Juezes came under the administration of the GN, some of them continued to act as before, this suggests that the GN did not have complete control. Other measures were also implemented to demonstrate that the GN was dedicated to Nicaragua’s welfare. Medical services were given as a charity to the Nicaraguans who did not have such services available to them. This included those who for financial reasons could not obtain civilian medical aid. When the world wide depression struck, some of the medical services were discontinued because of budget cuts; however they were continued in the regions of Nicaragua where no civilian medical aid was available.

Thus there is reason to believe that the Marines wanted to create the GN as the most influential organization in Nicaragua. This they tried to accomplish by concentrating as much power as possible in the GN. Thereby the GN officers would be able to demonstrate to Nicaraguans that the GN was a force for good, and if led by the right principles the organization would remain so.

Successes

One of the most glaring problems the GN saw in Nicaragua was that the people did not trust their government. This was also interpreted as a problem in relation to the reestablishment of the GN. Hence the Marines sought to establish trust between government and people. The U.S. officers saw that the improved law and order resulted in several other beneficial consequences. The economy improved as a result of law and order. However, more important to the Marines was the increased sense of security that contributed to a better relationship with the people. This contributed to an even more efficient GN, since the people were more willing to provide essential information.

The Marines in the GN were not as “culturally arrogant” as Schroeder argues. Some of the GN officers tried to accommodate their enforcement of the law to Nicaraguan culture and customs in order to build some trust between the GN and the Nicaraguans. The rules which were established between the GN and USMC detachments in relation to police duties in Nicaragua may imply that there were different perceptions of the issues law and order between the two organizations. Based on the differences in Juigalpa, the GN had a different and more tolerant approach than the USMC detachments. In at least one incident a U.S. officer of the GN departed from the racial and cultural explanations of crime. He saw the crime as a consequence of the economic conditions in the country during the worldwide economic depression.

The “good” Nicaraguan agreed with the GN and the U.S. mission that Nicaragua at that time was not able to handle self-government and had to North-Americanize. Thus to GN officers Nicaraguan patriotism amounted to agreeing and cooperating with the GN. On several occasions the Marines seemed to value proficiency in English, having a North-American lifestyle, and simply having lived in Europe and the U.S. as a sign of having “North-Americanized”. These different factors which enabled better communication appeared to function as cultural keys to being able to understand the Marines, their mission, and being able to show to the Marines that they had understood what the GN ought to be.

JDGN Matthews believed that the GN enlisted and commissioned Nicaraguan GN personnel were integral in the future of the GN and Nicaragua. Nicaraguans with at least three years’

service in the GN were considered nonpartisan and thoroughly “North-Americanized”. The GN officers had succeeded to such a degree in the “North-Americanization” of the GN enlisted men, that it was not considered unlikely that they would resist attempts to undermine the GN’s nonpartisan character. At least in part this “North-Americanization” was measured by the physical appearance of the GN enlisted men, not seeking to investigate whether they had otherwise undergone a fundamental cultural change.

The Main Objective

There is reason to believe that the Marines saw the GN as their main objective during the occupation. It was a thoroughly “North-Americanized” military organization, led by principles of nonpartisanship and impartiality. The GN was in the minds of the Marines the most critical factor which stood between continued order and a regression to the former unstable and disorderly Nicaragua. Thus the GN became the most important goal in itself. All other actions were reduced to simply being means towards a greater end, the survival of the GN.

Bibliography

Archival sources

U.S. National Archives, Washington, D.C. (USNA)
Record Group 127, Records of the United States Marine Corps (RG127)
Entry(E) 18A, 38A, 43A, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 204, 220, and 225.

Published primary sources

Smith, Julian C. et al. 1937, *A Review of the Organization and Operation of the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua: By Direction of the Major General Commandant of the United States Marine Corps*. Quantico: Marine Corps School.

United States Department of State. *The United States and Nicaragua: A Survey of the Relations between 1909 – 1932*. Reprinted in *Henry L. Stimson's American Policy in Nicaragua: The Lasting Legacy*. New York: Markus Wiener Publishing

United States Department of State. *Paprrers Relating to the Foreign Relation of the United States(FRUS)*, 1927, vol. III, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office 1942.

United States Senate. *Hearing Before the Committee on Foreign Relations. Use of the United States Navy in Nicaragua*, 70th congress 1st session. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office 1928.

Online sources

Personal Diary of USMC Lt. T. J. Kilcourse
<http://www.sandinorebellion.com/PCDocs/1928a/PC280105-Kilcourse.html>
(accessed: March 13, 2010)

Literature

Beezley, William H. 1969. "Caudillismo: An Interpretive Note". *Journal of Inter-American Studies*. 11 (3): 345-352.

Buell, Raymond L. 1930. "Reconstruction in Nicaragua" *Foreign Policy Association* 6 (18): 314-343.

Bulmer-Thomas, Victor 1987. *The Political Economy of Central America since 1920*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Burnham, John C. 1973. "The Progressive Era Revolutions in American Attitudes Toward Sex". *Journal of American History*. 59 (4): 885-908

- Camp, Richard D. 2007, *Leatherneck Legends: Conversations with the Marine Corps' Old Breed*, St. Paul: MBI Publishing.
- Campbell, Bruce B. and Arthur R Brenner, eds. 2000. *Death Squads in Global Perspective: Murder with Deniability*. London: MacMillan.
- Clark, George B. 2001, *With the Old Corps in Nicaragua*, Novato: Presidio Press
- Danielsen, Helge 2008, "The American Spirit in Europe Revisited?" *Contemporary European History*, 17(1): 117-126.
- Davis, Burke 1962. *Marine! The Life of Lt. Gen. Lewis B. (Chesty) Puller, USMC (Ret.)*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Dore, Elizabeth 2003. "Debt Peonage in Granada, Nicaragua, 1870-1930: Labor in a Non-Capitalist Transition", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 83(3): 521-559.
- Edelstein, David M., 2004, "Occupational Hazards: Why Military Occupations Succeed or Fail". *International Security*. 29 (1): 49-91.
- Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. 1994, *Kulturelle veikryss*, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- _____. 2010, *Små steder – store spørsmål: Innføring i sosialantropologi*, 3rd ed., Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Fuglestad, Finn, Morten Løtveit and Anne Kathrine Eian 1994. *Latin-Amerika og Karibiens historie*. Oslo: Cappelen akademisk forlag.
- Geertz, Clifford 1974. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gismondi, Michael and Jeremy Mouat 2002. "Merchants, Mining and Concessions on Nicaragua's Mosquito Coast: Reassessing the American Presence, 1893-1912". *Journal of Latin American Studies*. 34 (4): 845-879.
- Gobat, Michel 2005. *Confronting the American Dream: Nicaragua under U.S. Imperial Rule*. Durham: Duke University Press
- Grossman, Richard 1996. "*Hermanos en la patria*": *Nationalism, Honor and Rebellion: Augusto Sandino and the Army in Defense of the National Sovereignty of Nicaragua, 1937-1934*. Unpublished: Ph.D. Dissertation in History, University of Chicago.
- Hofstadter, Richard 1955, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to FDR*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf
- Joseph, Gilbert M., Cathrine C. Le Grand, and Richardo D. Salvatore, eds. 1998. *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S. Latin American Relations*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Kamman, William 1968. *A Search for Stability: United States Diplomacy Toward Nicaragua, 1925-1933*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

- LaFeber, Walter 1989. *The Panama Canal Crisis: The Crisis in Historical Perspective*, Updated ed. New York: Oxford University Press
- _____. 1993. *Inevitable Revolutions: United States in Central America*, 3rd ed. New York: Norton.
- Langley, Lester D., 1985. *The Banana Wars: United States Intervention in the Caribbean, 1898-1934*, Revised ed., Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky.
- Leonard, Thomas C., 2005. "Retrospectives: Eugenics in the Progressive Era". *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*. 19 (4): 207-224
- Leonard, Thomas M. 1991. *Central America and the United States: The Search for Stability*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Lewis, Adrian R. 2007. *The American Culture of War: The History of U.S. Military Forces from World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom*. New York: Routledge.
- Macaulay, Neill 1998. *The Sandino Affair*. Micanopy: Wacahoota Press Originally published in 1967.
- Millett, Allan R. 1991. *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps*, Revised and Expanded ed., New York: The Free Press
- Millett, Richard 1977. *Guardians of Dynasty*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books
- _____. 2010. *Searching for Stability: The U.S. Development of Constabulary Forces in Latin America and the Philippines*. Fort Leavenworth: Combined Studies Institute Press.
- Morris, Edmund 2001. *Theodore Rex*. New York: Random House.
- Munro, Dana G. 1974. *The United States and the Caribbean Republics 1921-1933*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Notaker, Hallvard 2002. *U.S. Marines - Fremskrittets misjonærer: Kulturmøter under USAs okkupasjon av Haiti 1915-1934*. Unpublished: Cand.Philol. thesis, Universitetet i Oslo.
- _____. 2008. *Coming Across: The Norwegian Conservative Party and the import of overseas campaign events for the media 1986-1989*. Ph.D. Dissertation in History, University of Oslo Oslo: Unipub
- Renda, Mary A. 2001. *Taking Haiti: Military Occupations and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Salisbury, Richard V. 1986, "Mexico, the United States, and the 1926-1927 Nicaraguan Crisis". *Hispanic American Historical Review* 66(2): 319-339.

- Schroeder, Michael J. 1993, "*To Defend Our Nation's Honor*": *Towards a Social and Cultural History of the Sandino Rebellion in Nicaragua, 1927-1934*. Unpublished: Ph.D. dissertation in History, University of Michigan.
- _____. 1996, "Horse Thieves to Rebel dogs: Political Gang Violence and the State in the Western Segovias, Nicaragua, in the Time of Sandino, 1926-1934". *Journal of Latin American Studies*. 28 (2):383-434.
- _____. 1998, "The Sandino Rebellion Revisited: Civil War, Imperialism, Popular Nationalism, and State Formation Muddled Up Together in the Segovias of Nicaragua, 1926-1934" in *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S. Latin American Relations*, eds. Gilbert M. Joseph, Cathrine C. Le Grand and Richardo D. Salvatore. Durham: Duke University Press.
- _____. 2000, "'To Induce a Sense of Terror': Caudillo Politics and Political Violence in Northern Nicaragua, 1926-1934 and 1981-1995" in *Death Squads in Global Perspective: Murder with Deniability*, eds. Bruce B. Campbell and Arthur R Brenner. London: MacMillan.
- _____. 2004, *Intelligence Capacities of the U.S. Military in the Sandino Rebellion, Las Segovias, Nicaragua, 1927-1932: Successes, Failures, Lessons*
<http://sandinorebellion.com/mjs/mjs-intel.htm>. (accessed: February 17, 2010)
- Speek, Peter A. 1926, "The Meaning of Nationality and Americanization". *The American Journal of Sociology*. 32(2): 237-249
- Small, Melvin 1996. *Democracy & Diplomacy: The Impact of Domestic Politics on U.S. Foreign Policy, 1789-1994*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Southern, David W. 2005, *The Progressive Era and Race: Reaction and Reform 1900-1917*. Whelling: Harlan Davidson, Inc.
- Stimson, Henry L. 1991. *American Policy in Nicaragua*. New York: Markus Weiner Publishing.
- Torres Rivas, Edelberto 1993, *History and Society in Central America*. Austin: University of Texas Press. Translated by Douglass Sullivan-González
- Vilas, Carlos M. 1992. "Family Affairs: Class, Linage and Politics in Contemporary Nicaragua". *Journal of Latin American Studies*. 24(2): 309-341.
- Walker, Thomas W. 1991. *Nicaragua: Land of Sandino*, 3rd ed., San Francisco: Westview Press.
- Wassink, Alicia Beckford 1999, "Historic Low Prestige and Seeds of Change: Attitudes toward Jamaican Creole". *Language in Society*. 28(1): 57-92
- Winant, Howard 2000, "Race and Race Theory". *Annual Review of Sociology*. 26: 169-185.

Woodward, Ralph Lee 1999. *Central America: A Divided Nation*, 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.